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MAY 1955 VOL. IV, No. 5

Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER *and* IRVING KRISTOL

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This Month's *ENCOUNTER* :—

How is Encounter liked is a question I was often asked in the U.S. No one was pleased when I replied it was often viewed with suspicion, because it was so obviously subsidized and people wanted to know by whom, and who laid down its "line"—David Daiches in "The New Statesman and Nation," March 5th, 1955.

THE ABOVE excerpt puts us in the debt of our American readers. Nor does it give us any cause for quarrel with Mr. Daiches, who—as he has since affirmed in a letter to us—was simply reporting a fact, not assenting to an opinion. However, it does lay on us the obligation of dispelling this "suspicion," wherever it might exist. It is, fortunately, a very light obligation which we can fulfil with a minimum of effort; and we ask our readers to bear with us through the next few paragraphs.

That we are subsidised is no secret—we have never pretended otherwise. All magazines of this character, whether it be the *London Magazine* or the *Partisan Review* in New York or *Les Lettres Nouvelles* in Paris are subsidised —an unhappy state of affairs, to be sure, but apparently an inescapable one. Nor is there anything astonishing in the fact that our subsidy is American in origin. We operate under a grant—made to the Congress of Cultural Freedom for the specific purpose of publishing ENCOUNTER—from the Farfield Foundation, whose moving spirit is the Cincinatti philanthropist and art-patron, Julius Fleischmann. It is by now customary (and will doubtless soon be habitual) for cultural institutions in various parts of the world to turn to American foundations for grants of money. The generosity with which such assistance is given has become a stock subject for conversation—and sometimes, alas, an occasion for envious recriminations—in the common room. We are very happy to be getting such assistance; in truth, we would be even happier to get more; though we should be happiest if we needed none.

The "line" of ENCOUNTER, in so far as it can be called that, is laid down by the editors. Our sponsors, the Congress for Cultural Freedom, do not intervene in any way in the editing of the magazine—moreover, one can say candidly that the idea of doing so has never occurred to them. The executive committee (and ruling body) of the Congress has the following membership: Denis de Rougemont, Ignazio Silone, Nicola Chiaromonte, Raymond Aron, David Rousset, Georges Altmann, Stephen Spender, Malcolm Muggeridge, Michael Polanyi, Carlo Schmid, Sidney Hook, Irving Brown, Minoo Masani, Haakon Lie.

We should like to say more about the Congress, but will reserve that for another occasion. As examples of the Congress' work, however, we may call your attention to the Asian Conference on Cultural Freedom, discussed by Philip Deane in this issue, and to a volume recently published by Secker and Warburg, *Science and Freedom*, which contains the proceedings of the Hamburg Conference of scientists held in July 1953.

● WE seem to detect an alarming increase in the rate of divorce between language and meaning. Only an incurable romantic would dare claim that this union has, in ages past, always been perfectly consummated. But only an incurable optimist could deny that we are now witnessing a crack-up of unprecedented proportions. It is not a matter of fidelity—one takes for granted a certain amount of playing about, of furtive liaisons and shifting attachments. But hitherto one expected appearances to be kept up; if there was not in fact fidelity, there was at least a pretence at coexistence—ah, there's a specimen, caught on the wing!

"There are also words bearing on them the slime of the serpent's tail"—so wrote the incomparable Trench almost a century ago (we quote from the 17th edition of his *On the Study of Words*). He was referring to a kind of degradation of language, as when the Old English *saelig*, meaning "blessed," is transformed into "silly"; and, as a cleric, he was properly annoyed. But there are other, more occasional forms of degradation too—as when a harmless word, which has been leading a

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most conventional and boring life, is suddenly rolled into the political arena, where it is freely pelted with nuances and ambiguities. Such has been the recent ordeal of "coexistence."

When words are set in motion this way, there is usually a *primum mobile*. In the case of "coexistence," we know that the word got its first impetus from Lenin many decades ago, was intermittently nudged by Stalin, and received its final push in the form of an atomic explosion. And now there it is, grown monstrously large in size—the main attraction in the game of international politics.

What does it mean? In one of its senses, "coexistence" seems to be a purely descriptive term—a euphemism for "the Cold War." It refers to the kind of situation G. F. HUDSON analyses in his article in this month's ENCOUNTER; an irksome situation aptly summed up in his title, "Divided We Stand"—but still a situation located this side of existence. In another sense, it expresses not a fact but a hope—the kind of hope implicit in ARTHUR KOESTLER's essay, which speculates on the possibility of the present world-wide antagonism being overcome by a historic shift in spiritual perspectives, before complete mutual extermination has been achieved. In still another sense it means nothing more than the desirability of a Big Three (or Four or Five) meeting; at other times it merely expresses an opinion to the effect that peace is better than war. And so on, and on . . .

There's one consolation in all this. Words, like people, die of excess; language purifies itself, if only because the business of the world demands it. Nevertheless to paraphrase Lord Acton: Happy is the word without a history!

● WE ARE very pleased that, beginning with this issue, ANGUS WILSON will join CHRISTOPHER SYKES as a regular book reviewer for ENCOUNTER.

● FOR reasons beyond our control, we've had to postpone publication of ISAIAH BERLIN's Northcliffe Lectures on "A Marvellous Decade: Intellectual Life in Russia, 1838–48." We shall present the first of these lectures in our next number.

● NOTES ON OTHER CONTRIBUTORS:—

MARCUS CUNLIFFE, lecturer in the Department of American Studies at the University of Manchester, is the author of a Pelican Book on American literature. He has promised an article on George Washington for our "Men and Ideas" series. That series, by the way, seems to have developed a very nice momentum of its own. This month, there is HUGH TREVOR-ROPER's long study of Erasmus. Coming up are André Malraux on St. Just and Peregrine Worsthorne on John Calhoun. . . . PHILIP DEANE is Far East Correspondent for *The Observer*. . . . I. A. RICHARDS has been spending his sabbatical year in India, studying Indian Philosophy. . . . G. F. HUDSON is Director of Far Eastern Studies at St. Antony's College, Oxford. . . . PETER MAYNE's sketch is part of a book on the Pathans which John Murray will publish in the near future. . . . G. N. S. RAGHAVAN is on the staff of the *Indian Express*. . . . The American poet, KARL SHAPIRO, is at present editor of *Poetry* magazine in Chicago.

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Sigmund Freud :	*Briefe an einen Berliner Arzt*
Hans Hellmut Kirst :	*Zur Kritik an "08/15"*
Oscar Fritz Schuh :	*Ausblick auf das deutsche Theater*
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Arthur Koestler

The Trail of the Dinosaur

LET us imagine a kind of temperature-chart on which the growing power of homo sapiens over his environment is represented by a curve. For something of the order of half a million years, from Java man to about 5000 B.C., the curve would remain nearly static, represented by a roughly horizontal line. With the invention of the pulley, the lever, and a few simple mechanical devices, the muscular strength of man would appear amplified, say, five-fold; and after that, the curve would again remain nearly horizontal for the next five or six thousand years.

But, in the course of the last three hundred years, the curve would, for the first time in the history of the species, rise steeply in leaps and bounds, until it pointed almost vertically upward. To draw this chart true to scale, we would have to use graph paper several miles long; even so we would only have an inch or less of the paper left to plot the sudden, dramatic lifting of the curve's head—like a cobra stabbing upward.

Another more specific chart, representing the destructive potentialities of the growth of power, would look even more dramatic—one merely has to remember that after the First World War, only forty years ago, statisticians reckoned that on the average ten thousand rifle bullets or ten artillery shells were needed to kill one enemy soldier.

Now let us contrast these two charts with a third one, on which we plot the progress of the species man in moral philosophy, in cosmic awareness and spiritual clarity. This curve will show a slow rise during the prehistoric miles of nearly-flat stretch; then, when the power-curve (P) starts rising, the spiritual curve (S) will begin to undulate with indecisive ups and downs; finally, on the last, dramatic one-millionth part of the chart, where the P curve shoots skyward with insane acceleration, the S-curve goes into a steep decline. The spiritual void at the end of the chart is less obvious than the accumulation of power; I shall come back to the "S-curve" later on.

The point of these imaginary charts is that they show a very unusual type of curve, a geometrical freak which forces us to measure time at first in units of hundred thousands, then of thousands of years, then in centuries and decades, until, towards the end, a single year weighs more than ten thousand years did before. A process which, once past a critical limit, shows this type of catastrophic acceleration is called in physics an explosion. A dispassionate observer from another world, to whom centuries are as seconds, able to survey the whole curve in one sweep, would have to come to the conclusion that our civilisation is either on the verge of, or in the process of, exploding.

I would like to labour the geometrical aspect of human evolution a little further by suggesting two more curves, the first representing progress in communication (C), the second progress in understanding (U). The C-curve, which would comprise travel and communication by visual and acoustic means, would again remain nearly flat for æons; then, with the invention of the printing press, the steamship,

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railway, motor car, gramophone, telephone, cinema, aeroplane, radio, video, radar, and jukebox (all, except for the printing press, crowded into a single century) the curve would rise steeply to near-saturation—the point where the whole surface of the planet is visually and acoustically interconnected. One should have expected that this shrinking of the terrestrial surface in terms of communication would lead to a proportionate increase in its intellectual cohesion, but this did not happen. The shrinking of the distance between nations did not bring them "nearer" to each other; three-dimensional travel did not abolish Chinese Walls and Iron Curtains, but merely extended them into atmospheric space; the unifying medium of the ether was split up by censorship and jamming. Even between such close neighbours and allies as the people of England and France, mutual comprehension and human sympathy is not markedly greater now than at a time when they were days, instead of hours, apart.

Nor did the extension of the range of the sense-organs through radio and television increase the intellectual range of the human mind, its powers of abstraction and synthesis. It seems rather that the reverse is true: that the stupendous amplification of vision and hearing caused a rapid deterioration of the intellectual and moral content of communication. In the new generation born into the age of television, not only the habit of reading, but the faculty of thinking in abstract, conceptual terms seems to be weakened by the child's conditioning to easier and more primitive forms of visual perception. The dangers of this regression from the conceptual to the perceptual, from abstract language to picture-strip language, are less obvious and immediate, but in the long run no less grave, than the spectacular increase in destructive power.

To sum up, our diagrams would show an unprecedented increase in the range and power of the species' sensory and motor organs coincident with a marked deterioration of the integrative functions which determine spiritual maturity and social ethics. There are frequent instances in history of moral slumps followed by a new upward trend; the alarming thing is the coincidence of a period of unprecedented spiritual decline with an equally unprecedented increase of power. The Promethean myth seems to be coming true with a horrible twist: the giant reaching out to steal the lightning from the Gods is morally insane. Hence the difficulty, as Bertrand Russell wrote a few years ago, "to persuade mankind to acquiesce in its own survival."

ANY attempt at such persuasion must take both the short-term and the long-term aspects of the situation into account. The first is political, the second transcendental in nature; and the two interact more directly than we realise. The politician unaware of the transcendental background of the crisis can only offer makeshift measures; and the saint who remains aloof in an emergency sins by omission.

On the level of practical policy, it is essential to distinguish between the desirable and the possible. We know by now that atomic war would be tantamount to a collective suicide of the species. To abolish the threat of atomic war is certainly desirable, but not in the realm of the possible. Interdiction of atomic weapons can only be effective if both parties agree to international supervision under conditions which include permanent inspection—the throwing open of the locked doors of secret laboratories, factories, plants, mines, and military installations. But such a policy runs counter to the tradition of secrecy and distrust which Russia and the Asian nations have practised for centuries past; and it also runs counter to the basic principles and political structure of all dictatorial régimes, Communist or other. A dictatorship that accepted democratic controls, internally or internationally, would cease to be a dictatorship. The Chinese Wall and the Iron Curtain are not accidents of history, but massive symbols of national traditions and social régimes whose existence depends on their ability to block the movement of people and ideas.

Even if the present rulers of Russia desired to submit to genuine international control and inspection, they could not afford to do so any more than they could afford to abolish censorship, the one-party system, the political police, and other essential requisites of dictatorship.

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Whether the dictatorship is good or bad, whether it is a dictatorship of the workers, peasants or dentists, of a bureaucracy or a theocracy, is irrelevant in this context.

It is equally irrelevant under what pretexts the Soviet government evades the issue of genuine inspection and control—whether by procedural subterfuges, or by rejecting "infringements of national sovereignty," or by spurious peace campaigns and the demand for a platonic ban on atomic weapons which would work against the side that manufactures and tests its bombs openly, and which would set a premium on secrecy. Oak Ridge, Harwell, Bikini, are widely discussed subjects in the West, while the corresponding places and events in the East are shrouded in complete secrecy.

I repeat: the abolition of atomic weapons under effective international control is entirely desirable, and by the nature of things just as impossible as it proved impossible to enforce disarmament in the defunct League of Nations' days. From this realistic starting-point, three courses are open to the West: to continue developing nuclear weapons in full awareness of the danger to the human species; or to renounce nuclear weapons one-sidedly, in full awareness of the decisive advantage thereby accorded to the opponent; or, finally, to start a "preventive" war (which is of course a contradiction in terms), based on the assumption that the West still possesses a decisive superiority in atomic weapons, that this advantage is being lost, and that war at the present level of atomic developments would be less devastating than war in five or ten years' time and would impose a lasting peace on a unified world.

The third possibility we must reject out of hand, on the grounds that it is based on the old Ends and Means fallacy. All social progress, all human justice, requires a certain amount of ruthlessness; all surgical cures, the infliction of a certain amount of pain. But this justification of the means by the end is confined to very narrow limits, to situations where all the factors are of a manageable order and the results predictable with reasonable certainty—otherwise, the surgeon's lancet turns into the butcher's hatchet. With regard to preventive war, none of the above conditions is present. The amount of damage that would be inflicted on humanity is incalculable, the factors in the equation are unmanageable, and the results unpredictable. Even on the inadmissible premiss that morality should be sacrificed to expediency and the present generation sacrificed in the interest of future ones—even on these premisses preventive war must be ruled out on the grounds that the magnitude and complexity of factors are beyond the computing capacity of the human brain.

Unfortunately, the premisses that we reject are not rejected by the philosophy of dialectical materialism which is the credo of our opponents; and our scepticism regarding the limits of man's ability as a computing machine, is not shared by them. Thus the possibility that our opponents may start "preventive" war at a moment which they judge "historically favourable," and under any convenient pretext, cannot be ruled out.

I would like to make this point clearer. In the previous paragraph I was not concerned with the question whether certain members of the Politburo think it practicable to start a war in six months or six years, or whether they think that the inevitable Communist world state can be realised without war. My point is that their philosophical approach to, and their terms of reference regarding the problem of war are different from ours. The West has no unified philosophy, but it has a long and continuous ethical tradition which more or less articulately, more or less consciously, permeates the thinking of both leaders and people and limits the formers' freedom of action. The leaders of the other side are not subject to such limitations either by the philosophy to which they adhere or by the machinery of democratic control. It is an unequal contest where one side believes in its historic mission which justifies all means including war, whereas the other does not; where one party is bound by certain rules of the game, the other party is not.

This difference ought to be constantly present in the minds of all responsible politicians, Left or Right, and guide their decisions, large and small. But psychologically, this is a rather difficult thing to ask for, because the tactical

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oscillations of Soviet policy, the occasional easing of surface tensions, and the frequent unmannerliness of American politicians, tend to obscure and blur the basic difference in philosophy. Wishful thinking, infatuation with pious platitudes, and the tempting road of least resistance are constantly lessening the West's chances of survival.

MARXIST theory teaches that the proletariat must exploit to the full the constitutional freedoms which bourgeois democracy is obliged to grant (for the bourgeoisie is bound to be "its own gravedigger"), until an "objectively revolutionary situation" occurs. At that moment the proletariat will rise and inter its opponents in their self-prepared grave. *Mutatis mutandis* the same theory applies to the international scene, where the notion of the "objectively revolutionary situation" is replaced by the "historically favourable situation" for adding another vassal nation to the existing ones. One-sided atomic disarmament would automatically create a "historically favourable situation" for Russia's bid to unify the world after its own fashion in the interest of mankind.

There is nothing new about the argument that the only deterrent against atomic aggression is an atomic stockpile. But there is a new development regarding the value of an atomic stockpile against non-atomic, local aggression. The theory that the atomic superiority of the West could prevent local aggression by the threat of massive retaliation has become obsolete for two reasons: first, Western atomic superiority is on the wane; secondly, the destructive power of the new weapons is now so monstrous that the punishment of limited and camouflaged aggression by the unleashing of open atomic war has become politically and morally impossible. A policeman, armed with an atom bomb and nothing else, could not prevent the escape of a couple of housebreakers without blowing the whole town to glory, himself included. We are faced with a new paradox: the superior power of a weapon may reduce its bearer to helplessness.

The policeman's part is made even more difficult by the fact that political crimes are easier to camouflage than common burglaries. Russia has conquered one half of Europe and a large portion of Asia through acts of aggression in varying disguises of varying plausibility, none of which presented a clear-cut *casus belli*. The possibilities of veiled aggression are inexhaustible; and it is unrealistic to believe that we can stop it by the threat of "massive retaliation"—which, if taken seriously, would mean that we ought to have reacted to the defenestration of Masaryk, or ought to react to the next "People's Rising" in Afghanistan, by unleashing the nuclear nightmare.

The upshot of this argument is that policing the world and guaranteeing collective security never was and never will be possible through reliance on the West's industrial superiority and dreams of push-button retaliation. To put it into a nutshell: atomic weapons are necessary as a deterrent against atomic aggression, but ineffective as a deterrent against local and camouflaged aggression. The security of our streets cannot be guaranteed by tanks, only by police constables in sufficient numbers, armed with conventional weapons to cope with conventional crimes. The practical conclusions are distressingly simple. The most conventional of all weapons, and the one which no nation can dispense with, is a people determined to fight on the beaches and to fight in the streets in defence of their freedom. However brave they are, they will never be able to stand up against an aggressor using the methods of total war. But if they are strong enough and brave enough, they will survive because of the aggressor's reluctance to engage in total war. The oft-heard argument "what is the good of arming a few more divisions when we know that in the case of a showdown Europe cannot be defended anyway," is both cowardly and false. Any European defence community can never aim at more than to make Europe unconquerable *short of total war*. But it can never aim at less than this. If, in the early post-war period, Czechoslovakia and Poland had been equipped with the number of divisions and the unbroken spirit of Finland in 1939, the Russians could not have deposed the Polish Government, nor pulled their Prague coup. They would have been forced to show their hand and engage in

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open warfare—and the odds are that they would not have dared to take the risk. It is indeed distressingly simple: free men must be prepared to defend their freedom or lose it.*

AT THE beginning of this essay, I made a distinction between the short-term and long-term aspects of the present crisis. All that I have said so far refers to the short-term aspect and to short-term measures. The best we can hope to achieve by these measures is to gain time. Even if courage and reason prevail to a much greater extent than in recent years, the result cannot be more than a strategic and economic patchwork on a divided planet.

And yet by gaining time, by prolonging this misery of co-existence, mankind may hope for a reprieve. The nature of this tenuous hope is based on the possibility of some unexpected mutation in man's dominating passions and interests. Whenever history became polarised between two competing power-centres, roughly one of two things happened. Either one of the contestants was subjugated (the Rome versus Carthage pattern); or a stalemate was reached (the Christianity versus Islam pattern). Such stalemates have always started as unstable and precarious forms of "co-existence," spotted with local outbreaks which threatened to grow into a total conflict. But under certain favourable conditions the stalemate became a permanent one, coexistence gradually changed into collaboration, and the crisis was over.

The conditions for this to happen are partly of a physical, partly of a psychological nature. The physical basis of the stalemate is balance of power, both "central" and "peripheral." By "central" power I mean the total strength which each side would be capable of throwing into a total showdown, and which acts as a mutual deterrent from risking such a showdown. By "peripheral" strength I mean the physical and moral capacity of exposed outposts and conclaves to defend themselves and hold out, if only for a limited time. This "peripheral" strength is essential to the balance, because it makes the potential aggressor realise that he cannot have his way in a swift and discreet manner, and thus multiplies the risks attached to aggression. The Christian enclaves in Jaffa and Acre during the Crusades, the Protestant enclaves in Catholic countries, and vice versa after the Thirty Years War, seem to prove that a stalemate may extend to the oddest geographical patchwork if the above-mentioned conditions are fulfilled. The Night of the Long Knives carries such vivid memories because it was an exception, and not the rule. On the other hand, the fate of the Jewish minorities in Europe, and of the Armenian enclaves in Turkey was a kind of St. Bartholomew in permanence, because there was neither a "central" power nor any peripheral strength to defend them.

However, a stalemate based on the balance of physical power is in itself not enough to prevent an ultimate showdown. The second condition is a change of the spiritual climate, a spontaneous mutation of interest, which blunts the horns of the dilemma. While the process of polarisation is at its height, it looks as if the whole world must either go Moslem or Christian, either Catholic or Protestant, either Monarchist or Republican, either Socialist or Capitalist. But if the deadlock lasts long enough, an unexpected mutation of the mass-mind may occur, the inevitable choice no longer appears inevitable, passion drains away and people simply become interested in something else. Religious consciousness yields to national consciousness, the fight for space to the fight for markets, the struggle between "Left" and "Right" to the struggle between East and West. The word "heretic" has now gone into

* The rearming of Western Germany is a side-issue which may be settled by the time this essay appears in print; but the passions raised by it will persist for some time and be exploited by the conscious and unconscious enemies of Western survival. The emotional resistance of the former victims of German militarism is understandable, but unfortunately beside the point; without German divisions Europe cannot be defended. The fear that the re-arming of Western Germany may lead to a repetition of 1914 and 1939, reflects a humiliating inferiority complex, and implies that Europe and the United States will repeat the mistakes which made German aggression possible. If the Atlantic Community cannot trust itself to keep under control a limited number of German divisions under unified command, then it has no chance to survive.

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metaphorical use, though once it meant torture and the stake; and whether we live under a King or a President, is the least of our worries. Over and again it happened in history that the dynamo which generates the light and the sparks was switched off just before the fuses blew. But in order that this may happen, some new dynamo must enter into action producing a different type of current, a shift of interest to a different set of values, conflicts, and predicaments.

Every branch of human activity—literature, the arts, philosophy, even medicine—seems to be subject to these unpredictable periodic mutations; see the sudden shifts of emphasis in painting from narrative to composition, from contour to surface, from the sculptural to the dynamic, from representational to geometrical. It is not fashion that changes but the focus of the eye and the mind, concentrating its attention on different aspects, in due turn, of the complex entity, man—religious man, economic man, homo politicus, homo faber, homo liber.

One of these changes of spiritual climate, which is of particular relevance to us, seems to have occurred somewhere halfway through the Thirty Years War. I am quoting from Miss Wedgwood's classic work on the subject, *The Thirty Years War*:

> Never have the Churches seemed stronger than in the opening decades of the 17th century. Yet a single generation was to witness their deposition from political dominance. The tragic results of applied religion had discredited the Churches as the directors of the State. A new emotional urge had to be found to fill the place of spiritual conviction; national feeling welled up to fill the gap. The terms Protestant and Catholic gradually lose their vigour, the terms German, Frenchman, Swede, assume a gathering menace. A new standard of right and wrong came into the political world. Insensibly and rapidly after that, The Cross gave place to the flag, and the "Sancta Maria" cry of the White Hill to the "Viva España" of Nördlingen.

Admittedly, by the time this great change came into the world, the war had run half its course and taken its toll of death and devastation; and it took another thirteen years to end. But perhaps the Russian conquest of Eastern Europe and the wars in Greece, China, Korea and Indo-China constitute the first half of our thirty years' war; and perhaps the second half need not be repeated—at least it may be argued that the conflict between Bourbon and Hapsburg had little relation to the original religious issue.

THE age of religious conflict was superseded in the course of the 17th century by the emergence of two apparently unrelated factors: the rise of national consciousness, and the rise of a new philosophy. The latter, based on the discoveries of Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler, was gradually penetrating wider and wider strata of the public mind. If the earth no longer stood firmly planted by God in the centre of His universe, and was merely a small planet hurtling through space, then, though religious belief did survive, it could no longer command the exclusive interest of man. The sky around him had remained the same, but the focus of his eyes had radically changed since he had learnt that the fixed stars of the firmament did not dance attendance to him, and were blinking down with detached irony at the tiny creature on his spinning cannon ball. Within a century, more or less, the mind of European man had undergone a mutation more radical and fraught with consequences than if he had acquired a third eye or additional limb.

It was a historic turning-point—the point where religion and science, religion and art, logics and ethics, began to part company and go their own separate ways. From the beginnings of civilised life, man's fate had been determined, and his conscience guided, by some superhuman agency; from now on this function was taken over by sub-human agencies. The deities of the past may have been coarse or sublime, scandalous Olympians, or a pure God of love; yet they were wiser, more powerful, on a higher plane of existence than man himself. The new determinants of man's fate—mechanical laws, atoms, glands, genes—which gradually took over, were of a lower order than man himself; they defined his condition, but could provide no guidance whatsoever for his conscience.

The consequences of this shift of "destiny from above" to "destiny from below" became only gradually apparent. Before the shift, the various religions had provided man with

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explanations of a kind which gave to everything that happened to him meaning in the wider sense of a transcendental causality and a transcendental justice. But the explanations of the new philosophy were devoid of meaning in this wider sense. The answers of the past had been varied, contradictory, primitive, superstitious or whatever one likes to call them, but they had been firm, definite, imperative. They satisfied, at least for a given time and culture, man's need for reassurance and protection in an unfathomably cruel world, for some guidance in his perplexities. The new answers, to quote William James, "made it impossible to find in the driftings of the cosmic atoms, whether they work on the universal or on the particular scale, anything but a kind of aimless weather, doing and undoing, achieving no proper history, and leaving no result." In a word, the old explanations, with all their arbitrariness and patchiness, answered the questions after "the meaning of life," whereas the new explanations, with all their precision, made the question of meaning itself meaningless.

Our thinking habits are so entirely conditioned by post-Copernican developments that we automatically assume thinking always to have followed the same method. We take the ethical neutrality of our "natural laws," the split between "religious" and "scientific" truth so much for granted that we assume they must have always existed. It requires a great imaginative effort to realise the full significance of the "shift of destiny" of three hundred years ago, and that it constitutes a new departure, a break in the curve of man's spiritual evolution as unprecedented and unique as the sudden vertiginous rise of his physical power. We don't know how many tens of thousand years ago man for the first time asked the question about the meaning of life; but we do know at what point, so close to us in time, he lost the answer to it.

FOR a long time the majority of mankind remained unaware of the implications of the new philosophy. Its pioneers talked in a timid and tentative voice, without quite realising what they were saying and doing to the mind of man, and often frightened of facing the consequences of their own theories. There were exceptions, men far-sighted enough to realise that the twilight of the gods was at hand, and foolish enough to shout it from the tree-tops—like that *enfant terrible*, Giordano Bruno, the Bertrand Russell of his age, who was burned alive. But when Copernicus set the earth spinning, he did so with a timid and apologetic gesture; Kepler saved his faith by declaring that God was a mathematician by profession; Galileo's career was a life-long walk on a tight-rope; Newton wrote a treatise on the locations of Paradise and Hell; and at the end of the long chain Professor Toynbee claimed that the Catholic Church, possessing the ultimate truth, was quasi exempt from the laws of history.*

Thus the new philosophy, with the exception of some of its more brutal propounders in the 18th and 19th centuries, made no frontal attack on religious beliefs; but it gradually undermined their foundations, on which all previous civilisations had been based. In the old days, man hoped to influence the superior powers which decided his fate through magic and prayer; now he could manipulate the mechanical components of his destiny, glands and humours, atoms and genes, and determine his own determinants. Prayer did not fall into disuse but its function, the influencing of fate, was taken over by the laboratories. Slowly but inevitably, divine providence was replaced by the drift of cosmic weather, ethical guidance by the ethical neutrality of science, humility before the supernatural by a feeling of arrogant, unlimited power.

Religion did not die, nor was it driven underground by the new philosophy—it was merely relegated to an airtight compartment of the mind and sealed off from contact with logical reasoning. The incompatibility between the two halves of the split mind was smoothed over by the churches' diplomatic appeasement of science, and by the believers' psychological resistance against admitting the split. Yet in spite of these mental shock-absorbers, religion gradually lost its power, became brittle and

* *Civilization on Trial*, London, 1948, pp. 238 *ff.* More recently Professor Toynbee seems to have changed his view on this point.

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fragmentary; once the controlling force of daily life, it became a spiritual luxury. The "oceanic feeling" could no longer fill man's horizon; it was preserved in a neat reservoir whose level kept steadily falling through drainage, leaks and evaporation.

Life was so exciting during these hectic, unprecedented centuries, that man did not realise what was happening to him. The navel cord through which he received his spiritual nourishment was shrivelling up, but there were plastic substitutes for it, and various forms of artificial nourishment. For a while the words *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, produced a new magic, a seemingly apt substitute for the Holy Trinity. There were breathtaking attempts to create a Humanist creed, and attempts to worship the Goddess of Reason; political movements and secular religions succeeded each other, exerting their immensely dynamic, but short-lived appeal. The vertiginous rise of the power-curve was accompanied by mass-upheavals, ideological crusades, and fanatical pursuits of utopian mirages. Each of them promised a secular millennium, a Thousand Years Reich or a Classless Society, born out of a revolutionary apocalypse. Yet all the time, throughout these toxic excesses and spurious illuminations, there was a muffled feeling of uneasiness, of growing frustration, of spiritual desiccation. The explanations of science became more and more formal, non-committal and meaningless as answers to man's eternal question. As his science grew more abstract, his art became more esoteric and his pleasures more chemical. In the end he was left with nothing but "an abstract heaven over a naked rock."

WITH the beginning of the 20th century, signs appeared which seemed to indicate an impending turn of the tide. The descendants of Galileo and Newton found that they had been too optimistic in believing that the universe could be reduced to a mechanical model. The perfected measuring instruments signalled the presence of quantities and processes which not only eluded measurement, but by their very nature would always elude it. At nearly the same time, similar crises broke out in the other sciences: cosmology, biology, genetics, psychology. Physical determinism was shaken, rigid causality yielded to the elastic laws of probability; science had to admit that it can never predict, only guess, what will happen next. The living whole asserted its primacy over the measurable aspects of the parts; medicine had to lay increasing stress on the power of mind over matter. The most fashionable school of psychotherapy reverted to the Jamesian view that a transcendental faith was a biological necessity for man and that "the total absence of it leads to collapse"—the dark, feverish night of the soul.

Slowly, hesitatingly, the pendulum seemed to start swinging back. Man seemed to be getting ready for a new shift of focus, a new mutation. But so far this has failed to materialise; and all attempts at a spiritual revival within the framework of the established churches proved artificial and abortive. History may move in a spiral, but it never moves in circles, never returns to a previous point of departure. The physicist who has witnessed the collapse of his mechanical model of the universe has become a humbler and wiser man, but he cannot be expected to return to Aristotle's four elements and to Ptolemy's sky rotating on hollow crystal spheres; nor will the physician, who has learnt to accept his limitations as a healer, revert to a pre-Harveyan view of the body. Yet the established churches demand from all of us who shiver in the darkness precisely that kind of intellectual suicide and surrender of the critical faculties. To ask 20th century man to believe in a loving god who condemns half his children to eternal damnation without hope of an amnesty, is really a bit thick. The reassuring statements of some modern theologians that Hell does exist but is empty, or that it merely means exclusion from grace without overheating, are hardly on a more adult level; and Mr. Greene's defence of the bodily ascent of the Virgin in the pages of *Life* magazine would embarrass even a saint. John Donne's "with a great, sober thirst my soule attends" was the statement of a perennial faith in the language of his time; "The Cocktail Party" in "The Living Room" is a parody of it.

Perhaps if Luther had been born after Copernicus and Newton, the gulf between faith and

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reason would be less disastrous. As it is, the established churches are venerable anachronisms. They are capable of giving a limited number of individuals a limited reassurance and a limited, sporadic uplift; but the Sunday driver does not answer the need for public transportation, and a Sunday faith is no answer to the peril threatening our race. We may postpone the atomic Sodom for a few years; but we cannot indefinitely prevent it.

Unfortunately, changes of this kind, the next mutation, the next jump ahead, are not only unpredictable but beyond the power of imagination. The causes which lead to these extraordinary transformations of the global mood—the springtide of Christianity, the ground-swell of the Renaissance, the hurricane age of Science—are equally obscure, even in retrospect. Hegel's dialectic, Spengler's cycles, Toynbee's challenge-and-response patterns are beautiful prophecies in reverse—and as doubtful as all prophecies are, though they merely predict the past. The more we realise the infinite complexity of historic causation, the Nostradamus-in-reverse character of all philosophies of History, the more helpless we feel in trying to predict the next mutation. We can point to certain analogies, abstract certain patterns from the Persian carpet, isolate certain trends and chart their curves; the rest is guesswork, hope and prayer.

My own guess and hope, which I have indicated before, is the spontaneous emergence of a new type of faith which satisfies the "great sober thirst" of man's spirit without asking him to split his brain into halves; which restores the navel cord through which he receives the saps of cosmic awareness without reducing him to mental infancy; which relegates reason to its proper humble place yet without contradicting it. It all sounds very vague and irreverent, partly because we can imagine the machines, but not the beliefs of the future, and partly because we have become so accustomed to religion occupying one half of the split mind, that the idea of restoring its unity appears blasphemous.

Is it really too much to ask and hope for a religion whose content is perennial but not archaic, which provides ethical guidance, teaches the lost art of contemplation, and restores contact with the supernatural without demanding reason to abdicate?

Clearly, the devout will regard this question as presumptuous and as betraying a lack of comprehension for the revealed, or symbolic, or mystic essence of faith, according to his notion of it. "After all," he will say, with indignation, or contempt, or pity, "You cannot expect a religion made to measure like a suit, to satisfy your specific requirements." The answer, I submit in all humility, is that the indignation of one's Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and Moslem friends mutually cancel out; and secondly, that the objection is historically untrue. For every culture and every age did have its faith "cut to measure," and did re-state the perennial content of all religions on its own level and in its own language and symbols. It is neither an irreverent, nor an impossible hope that this will happen again in the future. But it *is* impossible to turn back to the language and symbols of a past epoch, of a mental climate which is no longer ours.

My starting-point was an imaginary chart, which showed a vertiginous rise of the power-curve coinciding with an equally unprecedented decline of the spiritual curve of living faith. It is this coincidence of the two curves which makes the present crisis so grave, which makes us feel that we are travelling at breakneck speed through the night with the throttle open at full and the steering broken down.

The decline of the spiritual curve remained for a long time hidden or obscured by more dramatic events; and its consequences have only become fully apparent in our day. When, a century and a half ago, the sailors at Spithead and the Nore started their famous mutiny, they took pains to assert their loyalty to the King, and to point out that they were merely rebelling against certain Admiralty rules. They continued to take the supreme authority for granted and regarded themselves as His Majesty's loyal rebels. In a similar manner the founders of new, and reformers of old religions always took the existence of God for granted; they all were the Lord's loyal heretics.

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This seems to hold true for any period of human culture as far back as the beam of history is able to penetrate into the dark, and as far up towards the present as the beginning of the 18th century. At this point, the unique break occurs. God is dethroned; and although the incognisant masses are tardy in realising the event, they feel the icy draught caused by that vacancy. Man enters upon a spiritual ice age; the established churches can no longer provide more than Eskimo huts where their shivering flock huddles together, while the camp-fires of rival ideologies draw the masses in wild stampedes across the ice. Yet even this desolate state of affairs is preferable to the threat of the medicine men to remedy the climate by turning the frozen waste into a blazing furnace.

The horror of it is that they have the power to do it. If only half the official statements about the new nuclear and bacteriological weapons are true, then the next few decades, or the next half century at the utmost, will decide whether homo sapiens will go the way of the dinosaur, or mutate towards a stabler future.

We shall either destroy ourselves or take off to the stars. Perhaps the conquest of interplanetary space will cause a Copernican revolution in reverse, the emergence of a new type of cosmic consciousness. Perhaps the creation of artificial moons and similar toys will prove such an absorbing diversion that the old passions are deflated and their causes forgotten. Perhaps some unexpected discovery in the field of extra-sensory perception will provide us with a new spiritual insight, a new basis for our metaphysical beliefs, a new intuition for our ultimate responsibilities.

All this is vague and wild speculation, yet less wild and fantastic than what will happen to man if the near-miracle fails to materialise and the giant mushrooms start sprouting into his sky and lungs. The trouble with all near-miracles, such as our ancestors' rising on their hind legs, or the rise of the new star over Bethlehem, or Galileo's climbing the tower of Pisa, is the unpredictability of their timing. Once we hoped for Utopia; now, in a chastened mood, we can at best hope for a reprieve; pray for time and play for time. For had the dinosaur learnt the art of prayer, the only sensible petition for him would have been to go down on his scaly knees and beg, "Lord, give me another chance."

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Peter Mayne

Camera Obscura

"HE LOOKS quite usual. Much the same as anyone else here, as far as I can see. Perhaps he's a little more . . . sunburnt than most of us, and more handsome, too. He's being a great success, incidentally. Why did you hiss at me like that over the telephone, Peter?"

"I wanted to explain about him, that's why. He was standing right beside me, so I had to hiss."

Daphne waved a hand impatiently. "But why the need to hiss at all? That's what I meant."

"Because . . . Well . . ."

Some new guests were arriving and she had to leave me. The house would soon be full at this rate—a little Hampstead house, 19th century, with some fine furniture and a number of good and carefully-chosen pictures. The guests seemed to be mostly people connected in one way or another with painting or books—like our host and hostess. They might be expected to take most things in their stride—even Chainak Khan. Yet I was doubtful, because I knew him and his people too well, I suppose. There was no opportunity to explain things further to Daphne at the moment, however, and anyway Chainak Khan was safely her guest now, and it was true that he was being a success. I could see him through the archway into the next room, leaning up against a bookcase, his eyes half closed, talking and purring.

Graham came round with a jug of some mixed drink. "Your friend seems to be a great success," he said. "Thank you for bringing him. Are you ready for some more of this?"

I held out my glass. "Thank you for letting me bring him. I ran into him yesterday. I had no idea he was in England, even."

"What's he doing here?"

"Nothing in particular. He says he's come to have a look at the British in their own country."

"And what does he think of us, now that he's seen?"

"He says that in any case we're nicer in England than we had seemed to him in his country."

"That's a mercy," Graham said, and passed on to the next empty glass. It was in a girl's hand, an arm-chair away.

Yet I did worry a little, because I felt responsible. Chainak was so unpredictable, away from his own homelands: moreover, he had the power to charm strangers and liked to use it. The girl in the arm-chair whose glass Graham had just filled turned to me and asked: "Where did you find him? I hear you're responsible."

I was coming in for a lot of reflected glory and it was not, after all, disagreeable.

"I didn't just find him. I've known him and his family for years," I said.

"Where does he come from, then?"

"The nearest big town's Peshawar."

She searched her brain. "That's India, isn't it? No. Pakistan, now. Sorry. Is that right?"

"Quite right. Pakistan. The far north. The North-West Frontier, in fact."

"I see. Kipling."

"And Hollywood Bengal Lancers—but probably that was before your time."

"I remember. A Paythan."

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"Well, yes . . . Pathān, anyway. That's what they're called by people who aren't."

"And what are they called by people who are?" she demanded, but went on, without waiting for an answer: "Paythan. A man's handsome by nature, whatever the pronunciation." She gave Chainak an appreciative look through the archway. He was very handsome, but much more Tartar than is usual with the Pathans: Genghiz Khan in his youth, you might think: spruced up and done into an English suit, with a Karakul cap. He was talking nineteen to the dozen in his deceptively fluent English. God knew where he had picked it up. Not in school, certainly. He had never been to school, except to the little Islamic school in his village where he had learnt the rudiments of the Holy Qoran. He had had to leave in a hurry when he killed his cousin, so that he had had no schooling after the age of ten. I didn't tell the girl this, but it was more than likely that Chainak was telling the group of which he was at present the centre. I could imagine him telling them, as he had told me years before when I first met him. He had only recently returned to his village at that time, after a ten- or twelve-year absence in India. The little cousin's father, Chainak's uncle, had himself died meantime, and Chainak had grown big enough to defend himself. So he had come back at last. "I did it with my slate," he had told me: "*bong* . . . on his head. And then I ran away." When he tells the story now, he generally adds: "Mr. Vincent Sheean has written the story of me and my cousin. You know Mr. Vincent Sheean? He is an American. But as a matter of fact the cousin didn't die. He and me are excellent friends now."

Graham's gin and cider—if that is what it was—was as deceptively fluent as Chainak's English. It just flowed over the tongue and no one guessed what it might be doing inside, in the hidden recesses of the mind, so smooth, so honey-smooth.

"Graham tells me you're just off to the East," the girl was saying.

I said yes, I was making a trip to Pakistan, but only for a few months. I added that Chainak had promised to help me brush up the language during the week or so that remained before I left. It needed brushing up, too. I hadn't spoken it for years.

"Hindustani?"

"No. It's called Pashto."

"Oh."

People are either bored or impressed if anyone claims to speak an outlandish language. This one was bored, and I can't really blame her.

"He looks like a prince," she said. "Is he?"

"The Pathans are inclined to look like princes—but none of them are. They're mostly peasants. Sturdy individualists. They don't even have leaders in the proper sense of the word, let alone princes."

"Sturdy, anyway. Let's go over and join them, shall we?"

I TOOK her over to the group where Chainak was in the middle of saying: "All right. I will tell you." Then he saw us coming and broke off for a moment to say, "Hullo, Peter. I am telling them about that ridiculous man who threatened me." It was obvious that he liked the look of the girl with me, and he gave her a glance I've seen him use before. He knows exactly the effect he can make, given favourable circumstances. He made a little space for her beside him, up against the book-case. "I'm telling these ladies and this gentleman a story of London," he went on. "Peter knows it's true."

"I don't *know* that it's true. I wasn't there. But it has a true sound."

"Isn't that enough?" asked the man in the group.

"Not at all enough!" Chainak remarked firmly. "This story is true like on the Holy Qoran—or, for you Christians, like on your Bible. It is about me and a man meeting in a street of South Kensington. Nobody had told me that South Kensington is a dangerous place at night. The man said something, and I replied something polite, and then he said something about girls—and I said about last buses and how to get home after, and he said not at all necessary, and I thought a bit and then said 'After all, no thank you for your trouble,' and he became annoyed—because I expect he

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thought he was now losing the prize—and suddenly he pulled something dark from his pocket in that small and empty street which he had explained as a short cut to some other place, and he said fiercely: 'Come on! You'd better hand over your wallet!' Very fierce. But he was quite little and soft-looking—like a fierce mouse."

Chainak was making his eyes flash. His audience obviously wished to believe him and I suspect that they did. I believe the story myself. He does not play tricks with the truth, as a rule: at least I have never caught him out.

"What did you do?" the man asked.

"I? I said like this. I said: 'Young man. Murder to you is a fairy's tale. Amongst my people we are forced to kill each other because of . . .' What is it, Peter? What is the expression? Oh yes, because of our rudimentary social system. So I said: 'We are quite accustomed to it, as a matter of fact.'"

He had hardened his voice, no doubt reproducing the tone he had used at this strange encounter, his eyes closing like slits, which emphasised the Tartar look I have already commented upon. His lips curled up from his teeth as he continued:

"I said: 'If you are not gone while I count to seven, *I* will murder *you*.' And I made some motions with my hands." Chainak looked down at his hands contemplatively.

"And then?"

"That's the end of the story, I think," Chainak said.

"He went away?"

"Of course."

People looked at each other, wondering whether to believe after all.

"I am learning Cockney," Chainak remarked in a new voice, the story being finished. "And also Scotch."

"How nice," one of the girls said. "What can you say in Cockney?"

"Oh, many things. I shall have to think—and then I shall put something Cockney into the conversation, shall I?"

"Yes. That would be very pleasant. And Scotch?"

"About Scotch I don't have to think, because so far I have only learnt one sentence and that is 'durrrty buggerrr'."

"Interesting," the girl commented, unmoved: and the man put in: "You shouldn't say 'Scotch,' you know. You should say 'Scots'."

"He shouldn't say 'durrrty buggerrr' either, I think."

"I have a friend that I meet in a pub. He is Scotch and he is always saying it. He is from the Venice of the North. Have you been there, Peter?"

"You mean Edinburgh? Yes. But it is the Athens of the North. Not Venice."

He turned to the girl beside him. "Athens. Very well. My Scotch friend says that they have built their Athens in Edinburgh."

"Dear Auld Reekie," she said, smiling.

"You are confusing everything for me. What is Auld Reekie?"

"Auld Reekie? Edinburgh. Smoke-smelly, it means, I think. The Scotch cover their Parthenon with wisps of it."

Chainak was confused again. "What do they cover it with, did you say?"

"Wisps of smelly smoke."

The other man in the group laughed and broke in: "Parthenon is Greek for 'House of the Virgin.' But the one in Edinburgh doesn't look very much like the real one in Greece, to be honest. Probably the climate was wrong, and Sir Walter Scott. But it was brave of them to try."

"Ah. Virgins," Chainak said. "We people very much appreciate virgins. You don't seem to have many in London, if I may say so."

"The virgins are not for the visitors—that's the explanation."

"I'm told that until recently all your women were kept locked up. Is that true?" One of the girls was busily changing the subject.

"Not in the least true. How could they do their work in the fields if they were kept locked up? Or bring the water? Of course they work in the house too and if ever we take them to Peshawar—Peshawar is our big city, like London for you—they put on their *burqa*—the *burqa* is the big white cotton thing, covering everything from the head to the feet—they put these things on so that those miserable city-men

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shall not be able to see them. Because our women are modest, you see."

"But I have read that the women of Pakistan are all coming out of seclusion to take their part in the life of the nation."

"Oh, I see. But you are talking about something quite different. *I* am talking about our Pathan women—not about the down-country townspeople, and the rich nawabs and their women. Our Pathan women prefer to remain chattels, like God intended."

With a slight edge to her patience the girl started to explain about the position of women in the modern world, and Chainak listened politely. When she had made her point, he said:

"I see now. The sexes are the same in spite of what my eyes tell me. And if other men look at my wife and she looks at them, I may shoot neither her nor them. Is that what you mean? On the contrary it is my duty to shoot. My wife is for having my babies: that's what God has given her breasts and a womb for—and also strong arms for working in the fields. Only in time of fighting she can come and mix with outside men—who are then too busy shooting to look at her in that way. At such times she can bring food and ammunition to me and the other men, too: yes, and she can shoot. Straight —*t-hung*! . . . in the heart. If you were a Pathan woman, madam," he went on irritably, "your husband would beat you on the wedding-night, and you would have to defend your stomach—but if he could get your belt off, then you'd be finished. It would be shameful if you screamed or cried. All the other ladies would be listening outside the room, laughing together and saying: 'Listen! She's having a bad time.' In due course they would be allowed to enter the room so that they could report to everyone that . . . nature had had its way. It's just plain nature. London, and all this . . ." he finished up, with a sweeping gesture of his arm, "is not nature at all."

The girl had the grace to laugh and agreed that this was not really nature. Unfortunately Pathans do not share the polite western convention about giving in so that talk may remain on a pleasant, friendly level. Chainak must have decided to give her one more smack, just to point the moral. He said: "And so, madam, if you do not care about nature, you had better not go to bed with a Pathan."

THERE was silence for a moment—for a little longer, perhaps, than was quite comfortable. Chainak was unaware of it.

"What we Pathans lack, of course," he resumed meditatively, "is education—though it is spreading more and more now. I told you how I had had to run away? Well, that was a pity. I have done my best to learn something from people I have met, of course, but I lack schooling, and schooling is good. I must tell you that I find many things in London that would be good for my people, too. I like, for example, your policemen, and I frequently have conversations with them. They are kind to the public—though sometimes, I am told, this is not so. But as a rule they are kind, and behave like servants of the public, which is what they are. With us this is not the case. I will explain some day, if we meet again. Red peppers up the rectum, and other things. They have learnt all sorts of tricks, our police, but the real Pathan does not torture his prisoners. Sometimes it may be necessary to cut off a finger to send to the prisoner's relatives, if they are slow with the ransom-money for example. But such a thing would only happen when the prisoner is mean and refuses to write the proper letter to his relatives, explaining the need to be generous. Such prisoners are always rich, naturally—that is why they have become prisoners. In these cases he must pay for his meanness by losing a finger, and then another, if need be. But there is less kidnapping now that the Hindus have gone." He paused, thinking about this side effect of partition, I dare say. It wasn't very common, but some of the Hindus were rich, and it was always a possibility to be considered. He went on: "Now, with enemies, it is a different thing. We always kill the enemy prisoner before we allow the women to insult the body. You notice the difference? Shall I tell you how the women insult the bodies?"

I felt it might be better to stop short of these details. So I said:

"We've got an early start tomorrow, Chainak. It's getting late."

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In fact we were making for North Wales on the following day. I wanted him to see something of Britain other than a big city, and North Wales in spring, with its rhododendrons and azaleas, would be a good counterblast to London. I was going in any case, because I had friends I wanted to see before leaving for the East. And apart from all else I thought that if Chainak really got going he might say something that his audience would be quite unable to stomach, even though they would try to hide the fact. He would enjoy shocking them directly he discovered that he could. However, the girl with the militant feminist views had questions she was determined to put to him.

"Don't take him away," she said to me. "Just a few more minutes. Listen, Mr. Chainak Khan. . . ."

"You may call me Chainak."

"All right. Listen, Chainak. I'd like to know about marriages. Do the parents arrange everything in your country? Does the bridegroom have any say in the matter, or the bride? Can they meet and get to know each other before they are married?"

"But I told you! The girls don't go about veiled in our villages. You can see them there. I had seen my wife often. She was from a house in the same village. A sort of cousin's house. I had often looked at her from behind trees. If I had been living in the village when we were both children, then I could also have talked to her before. But she was big by the time I came back to the village and I had not known her before because she is several years younger than me. So I could only look at her secretly. I also sent her written messages, but she could not read. She was very beautiful. I was pleased to marry her."

"I suppose it is possible that marriage like that can be happy."

"Naturally. The wives love the husbands, and the husbands love the wives if they are beautiful and while they are still young. Later the wives have the babies to love them, so everyone is contented. It becomes difficult for the wives if they don't have any babies, as you can understand. Or if they have girl-babies."

"And what if it is the husband's fault that there are no babies?" the girl asked him.

"The husband's fault . . .? Let's stop talking about this, shall we? I shall now tell you something bad, because I find that I am telling you only the good things about us. The worst thing is the way we have to kill each other because of *badi*. How do you say *badi*, Peter? Blood-feud? Yes, because of blood-feud. In this way the blood-feud goes on from father to son, on and on—or brothers and cousins, any of the men in the family against any of the men in the other family with whom there is this feud. And in my family, for instance, there are now no men left except me and an old one who is too old for fighting, or even to work properly. Sometimes we have a truce, when we reap the crops, or when there is some bigger fight between our tribe and some other tribe. But I must say that it is a very bad thing indeed. You see I am a Pathan who has been away from his village for a long time and I have been able to see that in some things the habits of others are better than ours. This killing is very tiresome. Imagine! I have come to England on a visit, and now I must quickly go back because of this business of no men left. Two of my male relatives were killed a week ago, and I have this news now—by air-mail letter. Our enemies in the next village have got to a very strong position. They have gone ahead. I must do something about it, for the sake of the honour of our family, and for my own honour. The others would like to get me as well, because that would completely finish us, unless my wife gives me a son in time. I must go back and see, *Insha' Allah*, that she has a son quick. I have a place booked in a ship in ten days from now."

The tone of his voice, hitherto mocking, had become filled with a deep seriousness. I knew he meant what he was saying—but for the outside world it must lack reasonable plausibility, like a piece of fiction that doesn't quite come off.

"Well, well," said the other man in the group. "I have often wondered what Pathans might be. Now we know."

"I have talked too much, and not well," Chainak said quietly. "My people are better than me. If you want to know about us, you

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must come to our country and then you will know."

THE following week or ten days were, for me, filled with the anguish of having forgotten Pashto. It had slipped out of my head, leaving no apparent trace. Perhaps my struggles with Arabic during the several years that I had been away from the Pathans had been responsible, in part. Pashto, for all that it contains a good many Arabic words and has a script resembling Arabic but with certain additional letters, is completely dissimilar in its structure. It belongs to the Indo-European group of languages. All the time we were in Wales, Chainak refused to talk anything else to me. He told me endless stories, sang songs, infuriated the other people at Portmeirion with the unceasing gutturals of his language. Towards the end of our visit I was beginning to remember again. You can't ever quite forget a language once you have really learnt it, after all. We played darts in Pashto, and, in particular, Chainak grew ecstatic over a Camera Obscura.

"*Hagha der mazedar shai dai!*" he exclaimed approvingly.

"Yes, it is good. But I doubt if they make them any more. Edwardian children used to be taken to see them on the pier at Brighton."

"Speak in Pashto! I shan't talk to you unless you reply in Pashto!"

"How can I talk about Edwardians and piers in Pashto? You've never had either."

"What do you want to say about this Camera Ob . . . about this thing?" he asked patiently, in Pashto.

"I want to say. . . . Look! Chainak, look! Jim's come out on to the terrace. How close he seems!"

"How innocent! It's nice to be watching him when he doesn't know."

The Camera Obscura at Portmeirion is mounted on top of a solitary tower dominating the main block of hotel buildings and the terrace in front of them. All this is practically at the level of the estuary. Immediately behind the hotel block the cliffs rise precipitously. It is wonderfully beautiful. Concealed there, in the turret, and leaning over the concave table on which the Camera Obscura projects the image of whatever section of the surrounding landscape happens to be in the adjustable line of vision, we could see every detail of the terrace, two hundred yards away; Jim himself, in tweeds and a doggy sort of cap; his parrot circling in the mild spring air above his head, presumably screaming. It only stops screaming when it perches on Jim's shoulder or a tree. Then there was an old woman, a guest at the hotel, we supposed, though we did not recognise her. A goggling child who watched the parrot. An immense mimosa that festoons itself along the hotel-front—and, behind, the cliffs rising sheer. Chainak was feverishly working the two handles that control the mechanism. The image on the sand-table went wheeling up into the air with the parrot—the cliffs, trees clinging to it, cottages clinging to it too, the campanile—and, always, the parrot circling and (presumably) screaming. Jim had been left far below.

"If I had my sling . . ."

"Your what . . .?" I didn't know the word, so he repeated it in English.

"Sling. And a nice round stone. Pretty plump grey-and-pink bird. We don't have that colour, do we? Only green."

We looked up from the table into the shadows of the turret. The concave lens of the mechanism was turning slowly above us and, when I glanced down again, the parrot had disappeared from the image on the table.

"It's gone."

"There's writing on this handle, Peter. Can you read it?"

I lit a match and read: "Barr and Stroud. 1918."

"Is that the name of the people who make it?"

"I expect so."

"I would like to ask about one for me."

"We'll find out from Jim. I dare say he'll know."

"Come on. Let's go and ask him. I must have one for the village. Can't you imagine how useful? After all, we've got the *bruj—bruj* means watch-tower—so all we'll need is the looking-glass and this—this table-thing. It will be most convenient, I think."

BACK in London, on the eve of my departure for Pakistan, Chainak made me

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dial a telephone number, but it was not a success.

"Is that Barr and Stroud? It is? May I speak to the gentleman concerned with Cameras Obscura, please?" I waited while someone called to someone else, far away at the other end of the line. Chainak nodded encouragingly to me.

"Don't forget to say about how to fix 'the loot'," he said.

The man was back on the line now.

"What exactly do you want to know, sir?"

"I wanted to inquire about Cameras Obscura. Do you still make them? You wouldn't have a second-hand one, by any chance?"

"I'm afraid not," the man said, "but I'll make certain. Where would you want us to mount it? We shall need all the details, of course. The site, and so on."

"Well, actually," I admitted, "it's not for me. I'm inquiring on behalf of a friend who's only temporarily in London."

"Would it be for an amusement park? Or perhaps for the seaside?"

"No. Not an amusement park. Nor for the seaside, really."

"You know," the man put in, in a chatty voice, "we haven't had an inquiry for a Camera Obscura for longer than I can remember off-hand. In the past there'd be an occasional inquiry, from proprietors of amusement parks and the like. But in recent years, I can't recall . . ."

"It isn't exactly the same, in this case. It's for a friend of mine who lives in the foothills, fairly open country to his south and east, but rising to the north of the village, and he thinks it would be a great convenience to him."

"Yes?" the man said, to encourage me. I suppose there must have been a hint of uncertainty in my voice.

"It's for his watch-tower, as a matter of fact. He's got a watch-tower already, you see. So it ought to be quite an easy matter . . ."

"I see."

I turned to Chainak and reported.

"Good," he said. "Now tell him about 'the loot'."

"No. Wait a moment. We must jolly him along slowly to begin with. Leave it to me." I took my hand off the mouthpiece again and continued:

"The position is this. We've been visiting Portmeirion recently . . . Hm? Portmeirion. North Wales. Surely you must know. Yes . . . No, certainly not! I suppose some people might call it strange, but I call it wonderful—yes . . . yes, the *hotel*. Many, many more than three stars—but that's not the point. The thing is that they've got one of your 1918 models at Portmeirion and it would have done splendidly for my friend's needs. Can you supply one like it, and for how much? What? But I thought I had told you. He needs it in order to avoid having to keep a man permanently on duty in the watch-tower." I was getting to the point now, and rushed nervously ahead with what I was compelled to say: "There's a shortage of men in the village at present, and my friend thought that if he had a Camera Obscura he could make his women sit round the observation-table, doing their household chores, grinding corn or whatever it was, and at the same time they could keep an eye on the table, and twiddle the knobs. The exact site? Does it really make all that difference? Well, there's an orchard alongside the tower, and then a bit of land they plant with sugar-cane, and another village quite close by, and fields of maize. And to the north, mountains. But actually it would be more for observing the other village than anything else."

The man at the other end of the line was strangely silent. I even wondered if he had left the telephone. Chainak jogged my elbow and said:

"Why don't you ask him about fixing 'the loot'?" And then he said it in English for fear that I had not understood. He need not have bothered. I knew what it was all about. The Sten-gun, which he generally calls 'the loot' because it was 'taken' in Kashmir. But the conversation was already embarrassing enough without embarking upon this final complication before I must. Anyway, the man did not seem to have clearly understood thus far, yet.

"Am I to understand, sir," the man now asked from the shocked incredulity of his desk, "that your friend wants the Camera Obscura for observing the neighbours?"

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Chainak was getting impatient.

"What does he say, what does he say? Give me the telephone, Peter!"

He tugged at the cord, and at my arm.

"Let go, Chainak! You'll ruin everything. You won't know how to jolly . . ."

"Give it to me!"

Chainak took it. I had done my best, and now stood back in a resigned sort of way.

"I want," said Chainak in crystal English into the mouthpiece, but with a certain authority, "I want this Camera Ob . . . in order that my women can watch the neighbours carefully, as well as do their household work. Have you understood up to this? Good. Next. I want to know if you can arrange a place for the Sten-gun—which I have got—on top of the tower—which I have got too—in such a way that it will turn with the looking-glass and so that it can be fired at the neighbours, if necessary, when their picture comes on to the little table? Please tell me, without any more fussing, if this is possible for you. If it is not possible, then I shall waste no more time in placing my business elsewhere."

Chainak looked round at me proudly. I could hear a little voice squeaking in the ear-piece.

"Listen, Chainak. He's saying something."

Chainak returned his attention to the telephone.

"Oh. Ah, yes. Yes? Please say that again. Slowly."

The man said it again, and a black cloud came down over Chainak's face. He paused for a second, considering his reply—but there was a click in the ear-piece that even I could hear, and so, by the grace of God, it was too late for replies.

Chainak was furious. "Peter! Peter! Please get the number again. I have something to say to that man."

People outside Pathan-country don't seem able to understand the Pathan point of view. That's the trouble.

Tonight

Tonight I hear my woman breathing
Who loves me till my world is waste,
And leaning over see the child
The silver nutmeg, golden pear,
Foreseen and seen with clouded eyes.
What fate is this I'm captured by?
The world is for the living, is there more?
Beyond the shore the obvious sea . . .

I see the legend and the lie,
How in the kiss the eye was cured
But leaning over see the child
And hear the woman breathing.
I loved until my world was waste,
What fate is this I'm captured by?
The world is for the dying, is there more?
The obvious shore beyond the sea.

Nissim Ezekiel

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Marcus Cunliffe

The Intellectuals

II. The United States

ONE has heard of public figures who at some stage in their career are methodical enough to prepare an address—The Address—and to go on giving it, with trifling variations, for the rest of their lives, no matter what the occasion: a school speech-day, a reply to a toast, a peroration for shareholders, even as a book-review. I have wondered uncomfortably whether my article, or something like it, does not constitute The Article for intellectuals (or private figures, as we may call them, to underline the comparison). I can imagine a Western writer, over the last thirty years, being able to place The Article in any of a score of periodicals, under any of a dozen titles, with or without the qualification *American* that appears in mine. "The Role/ Problem / Fate / Dilemma / Plight / Isolation / Alienation of the Individual / Intellectual / Writer / Poet / Artist": any of these alternatives would do, with appropriate minor alterations in the text. In America, it could have come out in the *Saturday Review* or *New York Times Book Review* as "This I Believe: A Writer's Credo," or "Thoreau's Message for Today"; while *Partisan Review* might take it, with substantial revisions, as "Kafka's Ordeal."

In The Article, as these suppositious titles indicate, the intellectual is conceived of as an artist, poet, dramatist, novelist, or perhaps composer—or at any rate a well-informed critic of one or more of the arts. The Article analyses his uncertainties, the temptations to which he is exposed, the unsympathetic demeanour of the society he lives in (sometimes contrasted with a previous golden age of patronage and taste: the favourites are Periclean Athens and 18th century Europe), and the possibilities of improving his society, ignoring it, escaping from it, or destroying it. The situation has been visualised somewhat in terms of a beleaguered garrison, or a boat manned by survivors from a shipwreck.

I am not arguing that the analysis has been seriously inaccurate, or that the "intellectual" (taken in this sense) is merely attitudinising. Certainly the situation of intellectuals under totalitarian régimes is no joking matter. There is, though, an obvious danger of self-pity among the democracies, as the writer recounts once more, with a gloomy relish, the steady deterioration of Western culture. Now and then self-pity has yielded to self-hate. In the work of Mary McCarthy, for example, we have seen an able, bitter, "inside-job" raid upon the American intellectual in his habitat.

And, in any case, during the last few years the debate has changed its emphasis. In the United States, the literary critic Lionel Trilling, the historian Jacques Barzun, and the sociologist David Riesman, among others, have suggested that the intellectual's position in America is now quite tolerable. He is, they feel, fairly well in touch with his society—a society, moreover, that is much less crass than it used to be. Where The Article is on the whole subjective and æsthetic in approach, Mr. Trilling and the

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rest are cool, almost clinical. Instead of accepting the familiar notion of the intellectual as trenchantly opposed to (and by) mass-society, they have defined "culture" and "intellectual" in semi-sociological terms. To Mr. Barzun in his book, *God's Country and Mine*, recently published by Gollancz, "an intellectual is a man who carries a briefcase"—i.e., "possibly one man in three" among the American population. Perhaps Mr. Barzun is teasing his academic colleagues here, reminding them that they are no more intellectual in their taste than the average businessman. Still, he sticks to his definition. Though neither Mr. Trilling nor Mr. Riesman would be quite so inclusive, both would probably approve of Mr. Barzun's attempt to get away from the traditional version of the intellectual as one who is society's victim and outlaw as well as its prophet and judge. They would, apparently, stress the element of education-and-intelligence as a quality of intellectualism, rather than that of isolation. The name "intellectual," according to Mr. Trilling, implies "a certain intensity of commitment, the belief that the existence and the conduct of the intellectual class are momentous in and essential to the life of the society, the acceptance of intellectual activity as a mandate, a status, a personal fate." Elsewhere Mr. Trilling has spoken less orthodoxly on the role of the intellectual. Yet even here it is clear that he does not believe "intellectual activity" necessarily leads to conflict with society. And for Mr. Riesman, the crowd is nowadays as wistfully lonely as the intellectual.

Clerisy and Avant-garde

THESE semi-sociological approaches are reasonable and useful. But they have their dangers, just as the approaches made in The Article do. Taken to extremes (as they hardly ever are by the trio just mentioned), they lead not to self-pity but to a defensive all's-right-with-America heartiness. The former kind of analysis accepted American society as fundamentally the same as European (and therefore discussable in the same terms). The other kind —which is, of course, in its main shape not a new phenomenon, but one as old as America —insists on what is unique in American society (and therefore, by implication, denies that America is discussable in European terms).

Whoever tackles a topic like mine will find himself slithering in one direction or the other. Either the note of disdain, accusation, and regret creeps in, or else—through involuntary ventriloquism—America speaks out in a tone of self-exculpation and manly optimism. Try to combine them and the terminology betrays: with words like "intellectual" (or with such pejorative variants as "highbrow" and "egghead," both American in origin) you can, so to speak, only stroke the fur in one direction.

All that I can try is to define the terms again, and to outline whatever features are particularly characteristic of American (less so of European) experience. I use the word "intellectual" with reference to Western (i.e., European and American) civilisation since about 1800. By an intellectual I mean a person of unusual intelligence who, as the possessor of such a gift, has formed the habit of generalising (in words, paint, music or merely at random moments not communicated to others through any medium) about mankind and his world. High intelligence is related to, though not synonymous with, advanced education and influence upon public opinion. It may be objected that this definition does not deal adequately with the question of the artist, composer, and creative writer. Such people are sometimes not highly "educated," in America or elsewhere, nor articulate about what they are doing. And they are often not concerned about forming public opinion, though they might admit to a concern for public taste. But then, no generalisation fits these people. Fortunately, they mess up one's categories.

At any rate, the intellectual has occupied a remarkable and important position in the Western world, given its increasing industrialisation, urbanisation, and social mobility. His position has been important both positively and negatively. Intelligence, that is, has been both rewarded and feared. In either case, the person merely distinguished by intelligence has enjoyed a higher social status than in previous centuries. Until recent years, it has been ever

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harder for the intellectual to share fully in the life of his society; for he has tended to doubt the values of the expanding capitalist order that called his kind into being. Sometimes the intellectual (male or female: women, as a restless minority group, should be taken into account) has become an outright rebel. Sometimes he has, with varying success, combined a public career with private intellectual activities, not merely as a means of support but also because it might seem a desirable arrangement. One thinks here of Matthew Arnold. And sometimes (like Disraeli, or F. E. Smith, to give two more English examples) he has fitted easily into society and risen in its service, whether as politician, lawyer, administrator, diplomat, scholar, editor, scientist, or churchman—not to mention artist or author. Some then have achieved the ambition of attaining what Cromwell called "a high place to do good in." Without corruption or loss of purpose, they have also found it a high place to do well in.

So, if there have been many alienated Western intellectuals since 1800, whom I will label the *avant-garde*, there have also been others, of similar intellectual weight, though as a rule of less creative brilliance, who have remained more or less attached to their society (partly, in a good many instances, because it enabled them to move upward through the social hierarchy). Even in England, this group has not been as coherent as such a word as "group" implies. But it *has* existed, along with the desire that it *should* exist—half real and half mythical, like the hippogriff. In order to describe this hippogriff, T. S. Eliot some years ago revived the term *clerisy*, originally coined by Coleridge as a name for the scholars in a society. I will borrow the term to describe the non-alienated intellectual. *Clerisy* and *avant-garde* thus stand for opposite extremes of intellectuality: say, Lord Eldon and Shelley, to choose a contemporaneous pair. The artist or creative writer usually belongs with the latter extreme, in part because of the nature of his work, which absorbs his time and energy and requires a certain detachment—placing him "both in and out of the game," as Whitman said.

"The lessons of the concrete"

It is easy to select American figures who fit the two categories. Dean Acheson, Adlai Stevenson, or Felix Frankfurter (all of them trained as lawyers, incidentally) are as clearly of the *clerisy*, in my terms, as Henry Miller, E. E. Cummings, and Robert Motherwell are of the *avant-garde*. It would be possible to list other intellectuals—such as John Dewey, Lewis Mumford, or Robert Oppenheimer—who might qualify under either heading. That does not mean the headings are useless: it reminds us that they represent theoretical polarities, not rival teams of actual people. But it will be noted that the Americans listed are all figures of the 20th century. The 19th century situation is more perplexing, amorphous, and contradictory; and so much of this condition has carried over into our time that it is necessary to recapitulate what America was like.

A century ago, as a relatively new society, the United States valued intellect in relation to its practical worth. Americans were not entirely indifferent to the arts, nor contemptuous of scholarship. Their early leaders—Jefferson, Hamilton, John Adams—were a formidable *clerisy*, and something of their spirit has always, however residually or distortedly, survived. But in the 19th century Americans were apt to leave culture to Europe, to women, and to New England (especially Boston and Harvard). Other business took precedent, even more than in England with its "headlong bias to utility." "Here first the duties of today," Whitman wrote, "the lessons of the concrete." In America, high intelligence has commanded the respect accorded to any rare human endowment *that is not judged anti-social*: a vital qualification. Historically, the able American has been handsomely rewarded. But intelligence as a success-factor has also been related to normality. Nimble-wittedness was generously admired, profundity was somewhat suspect. Nineteenth century America encouraged the practitioner at the expense of the theoretician. Experience was preferred to speculation, the inventor to the pure scientist, pragmatism (in philosophy) to idealism (though this is rather a loose generalisation), the Americaniser (in

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education) to the *savant*. Perhaps no one better summed up the century's conclusions on this topic than Theodore Roosevelt. Though he wrote several books, and devoured quantities of other men's, Roosevelt was emphatically distrustful of intelligence—unless it were handcuffed to some stalwart virtues. As he told an audience in 1897: "I am sure all of us have known a great many men of large intellect, of whom we distinctly preferred to see as little as possible. Some of the men who have left the most unenviable reputations in history were men of marked intellect. . . . Sound morality and good principles count for more than intellect." Intellect, like alcohol, was a habit-forming stimulant of deadly power: this notion had become one of the bundle of truths by which Americans asserted that they lived.

Only a step divides such comments from the downright anti-intellectualism that has long been a feature of the American scene, and that by 1830 was almost dominant. At this early stage the pattern of future mass-culture was, as Tocqueville discerned, already set. In Europe its effects have been modified by the persistence of strong class-distinctions, which have protected intellectual activities by lending them a certain social *cachet*. In America, however, there were few such restraints outside the South. Even there, the strange Jacksonian blend of aspiration and cynicism penetrated. During the 1840s, for example, the *Southern Literary Messenger* (a Richmond periodical of some solemnity) ran a series of articles and squibs on the international copyright problem. With an amazing glee, the staid *Messenger* taunted Charles Dickens and other pirated authors, arguing that literary piracy was democratic, since it brought the works of the famous before the public at cut-rate prices. Still, the argument did assume that books were worth reading. But often the Jacksonian mood included an open ("Western") hostility to most forms of ("Eastern") culture or education. In Western areas, as the traveller-missionary Timothy Flint commented (1826), "an unwarrantable disdain keeps back the better informed and more powerful minds from displaying themselves."

The Cry for Experience

UNTIL the latter part of the century, the American intellectual went along with his society, benefiting like his fellows from its equality of opportunity. He did not starve. In contrast with his Russian counterpart, he was not threatened by exile or imprisonment. If he happened to be an immigrant, he felt both a wish and a compulsion to identify himself closely and rapidly with his new country. His misgivings, in face of the giant scale of material accomplishment, seemed petty. Consciously or unconsciously, he adopted his society's attitude to intellect and its manifestations. If he resisted, he was liable to end like Melville in drab isolation, expressing his discontent in oblique, hidden images: or, perhaps as a professor in a college enclave, to work in refined seclusion.

More commonly, his thought took on the American tinge. Thus, Emerson was a widely read, professional man of letters (though he would no doubt have disagreed with this description), yet we find him continually warning against the printed page. "Books are for the scholar's idle times." Taken in excess, they produce the "book-learned class, who value books, as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate with the world and the soul. Hence the restorers of readings, the emendators, the bibliomaniacs of all degrees." Elsewhere Emerson declares: "only so much do I know as I have lived." This is the American cry for experience: for the evidence of the senses. We hear the cry, as Philip Rahv has pointed out, in Henry James as well as, more nakedly, in Hemingway. Indeed, to Mr. Rahv,

> the intellectual is the only character missing in the American novel. . . . The American novelist's work exhibits a singular pattern consisting, on the one hand, of a disinclination to thought and, on the other, of an intense predilection for the real: and the real appears in it as a vast phenomenology swept by waves of sensation and feeling.

This contention is surely true of the work of Nathaniel Hawthorne, to take only one novelist. Despite his diffident, introspective temperament, he seems to share his countrymen's

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aversion to intellectuals. The typical Hawthorne wrongdoer—Chillingworth in *The Scarlet Letter*, Hollingsworth in *The Blithedale Romance*, Dr. Rappaccini—is led astray by errors similar to those of Ethan Brand, another of the Hawthorne gallery, whose "vast intellectual development . . . disturbed the counterpoise between his mind and heart." Or, to take another example, here is J. E. Spingarn, a scholarly American critic who nevertheless (in the glossary to an article published in 1922) defines intellectuals as: "All who lay undue stress on the place of intellect in life, and assume that the turbulent flux of reality can be tied up in neat parcels of intellectual formulæ."

Though not the whole story, this aspect must be stressed. So must the further question of the American *clerisy*, which might be introduced through the famous list, compiled by Henry James in his book on Hawthorne, of "the items of high civilisation . . . absent from the texture of American life" in about 1840:

> No sovereign, no court . . . no aristocracy, no church, no clergy, no army, no diplomatic service, no country gentlemen . . . no great Universities nor public schools—no Oxford, nor Eton, nor Harrow; no literature, no novels, no museums, no pictures, no political society, no sporting class. . . .

It is of course not literally true that the America of 1840 had no church, diplomats, political society, literature, no art. But if James is thinking of the "high place to do good in," and the means of reaching it, or of becoming established as a writer or artist, then he is not far wrong. There was, comparatively speaking, almost no *clerisy*—and was to be none for some time. Where it came to public life, the intellectual was at a discount, unless he possessed other, extrovert gifts in marked degree.

Dudes and Politicians

APART from journalism, perhaps, and a few of the more prominent educational posts, law came nearest to providing the right conditions. It offered status, the chance of a large income, and a means of entry into politics. Henry James, it will be remembered, first decided on the law for his profession, as the most possible of bookish pursuits, and entered the Harvard Law School in 1862. Thirty years later, Bryce said, law was still "the profession which an active youth of intellectual tastes naturally takes to . . . a large proportion of the highest talent of the country may be found in its ranks." But the law did not appeal to everyone in this era, especially if he was fastidious; and certainly it soon lost its savour for Henry James.

Nor, after Andrew Jackson's time, was politics a career that attracted many intellectuals. From the presidencies of John Quincy Adams (1825–29) to Woodrow Wilson (1913–21), there were no intellectual Presidents (though several who were remarkably shrewd), unless we decide to count Theodore Roosevelt. They can hardly be blamed for not appointing intellectuals to their cabinets. Nor was the average Congressman an intellectual—though Henry Adams was being skittish when he wrote to an English friend (in 1874) about the "barbaric simplicity of our legislators," and claimed to "feel a certain vague sense of personal fear when in close proximity to one of our south-western congressmen, as I do when I meet a Sioux warrior on the plains." Washington was only the political, not the cultural capital of the United States. And the rule of residence in one's constituency, to name another consideration, made American political life highly competitive and precarious. Similar geographical factors, and the fierce exigencies of the spoils system, combined to discourage the intellectual, too, from a civil service career. (The distribution of offices—and the selection of candidates for Rhodes scholarships, Fulbright fellowships, etc.—on a geographical basis, whether prescribed or not, has been inevitable in so huge a country. But it has still further reduced the claim of *intellectual* merit to determine appointment.)

The foreign service might seem an exception to what has been said. The Secretary of State held the principal post in the cabinet, and was usually a man of some eminence. The diplomatic branch of the service was, by American standards, extremely conservative (and is still so: a quite high proportion of its career officers come from the eastern states and have been educated at private schools). An aristocracy of

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wealth, though not of birth, has tended to occupy the senior diplomatic posts. And while these, like consular places, were often granted for political services, it would be possible to furnish a fairly impressive list of writers, editors, and publishers who received appointments. Thus, up to the First World War, legations or embassies had been headed by Washington Irving (Madrid), J. L. Motley (Vienna and London), James Russell Lowell (Madrid and London), John Hay (London), Walter Hines Page (London), and Brand Whitlock (Brussels). Consular jobs had been given to James Fenimore Cooper (Lyons), Hawthorne (Liverpool), W. D. Howells (Venice) and Bret Harte (Krefeld and Glasgow). To this extent, literature and public life coincided; here in more than one sense America and Europe touched. Yet one should not overstate the significance of such appointments. Krefeld and Glasgow. . . .

The main rule held: in American government and politics the intellectual was at a disadvantage, especially if he had been privately educated. Contrast the smooth progress of clever young Englishmen through their school- and college-days, with the hardships of Theodore Roosevelt, raised by tutors and at Harvard, in the New York state legislature. According to a politician who first saw young Roosevelt at a party caucus (which he attended, against all the proprieties, in evening dress), "he addressed the chairman in the vernacular of the first families of New York. We almost shouted with laughter to think that the most veritable example of a New York dude had come to the chamber." No wonder that Roosevelt had to go and shake off his upbringing, by ranching in the Dakotas. (Not all his upbringing, though. When he went after some horse-thieves once, he took a copy of *Anna Karenina* with him—and read it between whiles.)

As for the American church, or rather churches—a multitude, none nationally established—none presented the ideal high place to to do good in. There were thousands of worthy clerics, respected in their communities; but there were very few scholar-bishops. Indeed, among the Protestant denominations it is hard to think of prominent figures who were also known for their intellectual ability. The clerics who leap to mind are either men like Emerson and Theodore Parker, who ended up outside the church, or else the fashionable preachers and reformers: DeWitt Talmage, Henry Ward Beecher, Lyman Abbott. In the American Catholic church it was not very different (though room was found for the footloose Orestes Brownson and for Isaac Hecker): instead of a Newman or a Manning, it threw up robust warriors or amiable pacifiers—an Archbishop Ireland or a Cardinal Gibbons.

The Cultural Mutiny

THESE examples should do to establish the simple point that the American *clerisy* existed only in fragmented form (with a sizeable fragment in college faculties—these now linked, it should be said, by professional associations and periodicals). In mild yet insidious ways, American society was "unfair" to the intellectual. His society was probably wise though, in view of what it had made him, to distrust the intellectual as a leader. Horace Greeley in politics was a pathetic figure; and among his "mugwump" colleagues, able editors like G. W. Curtis and Henry Watterson were ineffective as politicos. Woodrow Wilson had vices that might be traced to his intellectual outlook. America produced brilliant men in professions where it was possible to combine the life of experience with the life of thought: in journalism, for instance, or in some scientific work (as with the explorer-geologists Clarence King and John Wesley Powell). But she also produced curious misfits (like the soldier-intellectual Ethan Allen Hitchcock, pining for intellectual companionship amid the banalities of garrison life), slightly forlorn peripheral people (Henry Adams, and his brother Brooks). Reaction to Philistinism bred an unfocussed, impalpable discontent. Collectively, the grievances of the intellectual oppressed him: individually they seemed nothing to make a fuss about. There was not even an Academy of entrenched officialdom to challenge. Hence the querulousness of the American intellectual type, as it emerged more clearly at the close of the century. Hence the incoherent snobbery of old families and newly

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rich alike: hence the search for firmer sanctions through expatriation, the ambivalent dislike of and yearning for Europe. Hence the refuge—from excessive masculinity—in effeminacy or homosexuality. Hence the growth, in a void, of intellectual panaceas, of "crank" absurdities: so that at this period, it could be crudely said, America had a choice of bank-managers or bimetallists: bores or zanies.

All of these elements have persisted to some extent up to the present day. But the 20th century has brought fresh elements into play. Between 1900 and the Second World War the intellectual situation was clarified. The *clerisy* did not appear to be much more sharply defined. However, an *avant-garde* did emerge, for several reasons. The population of America doubled from 1900 to 1950, and the process of urbanisation continued. By 1900, Chicago had 1,700,000 inhabitants, and New York twice as many. There was a concomitant increase in the absolute number of intellectuals, though the proportion of intellectuals to the total population naturally remained small. Once there was an *avant-garde* of 50,000 or so—not many to ask for in a population of 100 million—and once they were concentrated in a few cities (principally in New York), then periodicals could be launched (though they might soon sink), experimental plays performed, and art-shows organised. Instead of being isolated, the intellectuals in these groups were now merely self-contained.

The number of intellectuals increased also through immigration, especially—after about 1880—through Jewish immigration. New York became a great Jewish city; and though the Jews, in America as everywhere else, were a minority group, their minority traits matched some of those of the general *avant-garde* minority. Indeed, their cultivation, their respect for learning, and their ironical humour have had an extraordinarily pervasive influence in America.

Moreover, the immigrant no longer felt obliged to applaud America. Some did, quite genuinely. But songs of praise like *The Americanization of Edward Bok* (1920) were accompanied by works like Abraham Cahan's less jubilant *Rise of David Levinsky* (1917). The immigrant took his cue from the native-born intellectual, who decided that the American experiment was a failure. The United States had turned into a nation-state, with the same capitalist-imperialist features as Britain, France, or Germany. Its mass-culture menaced him, his spiritual liberty was at stake. All these views are to be found in, say, Randolph Bourne's *Youth and Life* (1913). By 1917, when America entered the War, the intellectual knew where he stood: or abruptly found out.

It was likely enough that he had opposed American participation. At all events, the war confirmed him in his conviction of lonely rightness. It was a shattering experience for him (the shock can be read about in Hemingway, Dos Passos, E. E. Cummings, or Malcolm Cowley), just because he was ready to be shattered. Along with the Russian Revolution, it finally proved to the American *avant-garde* that they knew better than their society. It is not too wild to say that 1917, the year of revolution and mutiny, also marked a cultural mutiny in America—a movement that was to adopt the vocabulary of Marx together with that of Freud. (Freud by this time, in the words of Alfred B. Kuttner, had become "epidemic in America." In 1916, he claims, there were no less than 500 alleged psychoanalysts in New York City alone.)

High Spirits and Low Morale

IN THE years after 1917 the American *avant-garde* perfected its techniques of revolt. This is how one of its agitators, H. L. Mencken, explains the era:

> The war was fought ignobly; its first and most obvious effect was to raise up a horde of cads, and set them in authority as spokesmen of the nation. But out of that swinishness there was bound to flow a desire to re-examine the whole national pretension —to turn on the light, to reject old formulae, to think things out anew and in terms of reality. Suddenly the old houses of cards came tumbling down, and the professors inhabiting them ran about in their nightshirts, bawling for the police.

How characteristic to invoke "reality" and to jeer at "professors." The mutiny went with a swagger: as we can see from another post-war manifesto, an essay on "The Intellectual Life"

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by Harold E. Stearns, in *Civilization in the United States* (1922), a symposium edited by him:

> The most hopeful thing of intellectual promise in America today is the contempt of the younger people for their elders. . . . It is not a disciplined contempt; it is not yet kindled by any real love of intellectual values—how could it be? Yet it is a genuine and moving attempt to create a way of life free from the bondage of an authority that has lost all meaning, even to those who wield it. Some it drives in . . . pathetic expatriotism from the country [including Stearns himself, who went off to Paris at about the time his symposium was published, and remained there through the 1920s]; many it forces underground, where, much as in Russia before the revolution of 1905, the *intelligentsia* meet their own kind and share the difficulties of their common struggle against an environment that set out to destroy them. . . . The more the pressure of standardisation is applied to them the sharper and keener . . . becomes their rebellion against it. . . .

Among the *avant-garde*, high spirits were thus grafted on to low morale. For the first time, the American intellectual discovered his status —in a joke: namely, that he had no status. He experienced the joy of being avowedly nobody; and also the satisfaction of being one of 50,000 nobodies, able to communicate through little magazines and to derive from them a safe yet conspiratorial thrill. With a delicious, almost twice-born, sensation of freedom he could glide about at will (to Europe even, where there was no Prohibition and it was so much cheaper to live). He revelled in the atrocities of the American scene, as yet hardly touched by the novelist, and in a new confidence in his power to express himself. The very lack of intellectuality that Stearns mentioned could be considered an advantage—a matter of being uncommitted to anything except "reality." As Lieutenant Henry said in *Farewell to Arms*: "I was not made to think. I was made to eat. My God, yes. Eat and drink and sleep with Catherine." And then there was the chance of being acclaimed as a somebody, without having courted the public. Scott Fitzgerald at twenty-four made $18,000 from his writing in a twelvemonth. The *avant-garde* hardly noticed how responsive the public sometimes was. A solid citizen drinking in a speakeasy was also, in his way, a conspirator. The intellectual, for his part, was ready to appreciate some aspects of American life, including jazz and the movies (and even the burlesque theatre: E. E. Cummings once discussed his typographical experiments in terms of an old "burlesk" joke: " 'Would you hit a woman with a child?—No, I'd hit her with a brick.' Like the burlesk comedian, I am abnormally fond of that precision which creates movement"). Even as an expatriate, he was experimenting with his new freedom. For, William Carlos Williams wrote of his first visit to Europe:

> As we drank—and whisky was to the imagination of the Paris of that time like milk to a baby—we imagined ourselves the first fingers of a sea that coming up to a shore would one day inundate the whole region. Unsteadily we walked home to our hotels.

From Self-Consciousness to "Social Consciousness"

WITH the depression years of the 1930s the tide receded. Most of the expatriates came home, to join the John Reed clubs and paint "socially-conscious" murals. The term suggested that the intellectual had awakened from social-*un*consciousness. But after all, the 1920s had had their socially-conscious moments. If the Scottsboro case (involving Negroes accused of raping white women) was the *cause célèbre* of the thirties, what was the equivalent for the twenties? Not the Scopes trial (despite its fun at the expense of Bible-belt fundamentalists and their counsel, William Jennings Bryan—a former Secretary of State), but surely the Sacco–Vanzetti case, which dragged on grimly from 1920 to the final execution of the two anarchists in 1927.

And, more widely, the change of outlook is explicable if one remembers how recently the *avant-garde* had become aware of itself. Its members were still learning their lines, still a displaced group seeking to define their position. From self-consciousness to social-consciousness was an obvious transition. Walt Whitman said that his "great word" was *solidarity*. Though by no means all American intellectuals accepted Communism, it supplied

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some of them with the missing sense of solidarity. Marxism explained themselves to themselves, comprehensively: they were the *intelligentsia*, all was predicted, including their desertion. Marxism took the place of their lost faith in America as America: a faith that had, they felt, become the prerogative of chauvinist organisations like the American Legion. And Marxism ministered to their old belief in social equality. Seceders, some of them, from the comfortable sections of society, they identified themselves with the working class. Once more, with its usual anti-intellectual ambience, "reality" was invoked. The worker's life was "real": that of the mere highbrow was "sterile."

Yet the intellectual was drawn into the life of his nation as never before. Mencken had ridiculed politics as an "obscene farce"; but now political activity at all levels was indulged in by all kinds of intellectuals. And they found much to approve in their government. The Federal Writers' Project, a WPA venture, made employment for several thousand writers, who under its direction compiled substantial guidebooks, folklore surveys, and the like. The Theater Project took care of the ailing drama, the Music Project of composers and performers. The Federal Art Project followed previous relief programmes in procuring commissions for artists, opening art centres, and so on. Not only did the intellectual receive aid from these projects: he (or she) helped to manage them. At the end of the decade a poet (Archibald MacLeish) even became Librarian of Congress.

In other words, the Depression did something to create an American *clerisy*, and to lessen the hostility to it of the *avant-garde*, which had long mocked the colleges and universities (the nearest thing to an Academy) as guardians of the "genteel tradition." "Real thinkers," Harold Stearns had said in 1922, "do not make this ascetic divorce between the passions and the intellect . . . which is the central characteristic of the genteel tradition." The *avant-garde* often discovered its villains among the educators: witness the hatred for Amy Lowell's brother, the president of Harvard, after he pronounced that Sacco and Vanzetti were guilty men. During the Depression, however, members of the *avant-garde* moved toward the *clerisy*; thousands of college graduates followed the first Brains Trust professors to Washington, to take jobs in government agencies. Their activities have since grown so suspect that it is hard now to recapture the atmosphere of the capital at that time. But despite frustrations, inefficiencies, and Marxist ambiguities, it seems undeniable that the average intellectual in government service laboured devotedly—and not ineffectually. Gradually it ceased to be so fashionable to heckle American colleges.

The war years 1941–45 in some ways extended the developments of the Depression. Though WPA projects had ended, so had the economic reason for them. Intellectuals continued to move into the administrative maze at Washington, or went into other war-services. The sense of national emergency for a spell postponed all doubts. But then, as everyone knows, the climate changed. Communism became morally (and almost legally) outlawed in the United States. Another *cause célèbre* grew, to join the Sacco-Vanzetti and Scottsboro trials—but with, of course, the prodigious difference that in these earlier battles (or, to go back further, in the Dreyfus case) the defendants were, to all liberal thinking, innocent, even if the court decreed otherwise. That he was right, and society wrong, was the intellectual's sustaining assumption, his one certainty. But Alger Hiss was found guilty through evidence that could not be controverted. One might still think that there were palliating circumstances; but how wretchedly less confident these sounded than the ringing defiances of the other trials.

The history of twenty years was reinterpreted; intellectual after intellectual changed his mind, noisily or in privacy. Some have behaved calmly. Others show the old tendency to self-pity. Others again have a penitential, hangdog look, like trusties permitted during good behaviour to catalogue the library and weed the governor's garden. Altogether, there has been an unfortunate loss of self-respect. Some intellectuals have felt that, wrong about Communism, they must be occupationally prone to be wrong about everything, except

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the technical details of their arts and trades; whereas the common man, being in touch with "reality" is likely to be right. If he was right about Communism, why not about standards in the arts, or the mental processes of scientists?

Levelling-up and Levelling-down

BUT it would be misleading and inadequate to end on this theme. Although anti-intellectualism is only too apparent, and although the problems of the mass-audience are disturbing, there are plenty of other things to be said—as Messrs. Trilling, Barzun, and Riesman show. The intellectual as *avant-garde* would have lost some of his functions even without the Hiss disaster. Ideologies lack appeal, in 1955: we now have a plausible argument by Daniel Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics*, that it was always so in America, blessedly. He is right in several ways, though like the rest of us he is a prisoner of the *Zeitgeist*. My terms, *avant-garde* and *clerisy*, had only a vague relevance for the 19th century, not because there were no clever men in America but because they were distributed in so many unexpected corners. In the 20th century, an *avant-garde* comparable to those of Europe existed for twenty-five years in full vigour (amassing in the process a most impressive sum of intellectual achievement), and still shows some signs of a pulse.

As for the *clerisy*, it will be apparent that this term has not done me much good, except as a sort of offstage character in a play—whose appearance the other characters pretend to anticipate eagerly, but whom all secretly dislike. And then in this play (let us suppose that it was a very bad *avant-garde* piece, an allegorical blur, an accidental parody of O'Neill), at the very end, when the mysterious character has not yet showed up, it turns out that he never existed in his own right, but was nevertheless *there*, in the music, the masks and the muslin, parcelled out in little bits among all the other characters.

There has been (to make use of this calamitous image) a collective *clerisy*, and there is one now, inextricably mixed up with what remains of the *avant-garde*. Though the whole group is not so numerous in my definition as with Jacques Barzun's briefcase-carriers, it is sizeable. Very roughly, it includes most of the men and women with a college degree who voted for Adlai Stevenson in 1952, or who seriously considered doing so. Its members are to be found among professional artists and writers (several thousands), in government posts, on university faculties, in journalism (some of them as "*Time*-servers, *Life*-boys, *Fortune*-hunters and *Post*-men") and publishing, among architects (influenced in some cases by the great Europeans—Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Moholy-Nagy, Mendelssohn—who moved to America), in the entertainment world (films, radio, television, drama), in advertising agencies, and in other businesses. They have no "solidarity" in the Popular Front sense. They can however be more or less identified—as Russell Lynes demonstrated amusingly a few years ago—through their tastes in books, food and wine, furnishings, recreations, etc. Even this method of classification, which might seem secondary at best, is far from perfect. There is a large gap between the income of a successful advertising executive and that of a college instructor or a struggling novelist. The poverty of the latter, in a prosperous country, is curiously shameful—almost as if he smelt bad.

Yet it is the only sort of classification which, in the absence of ideologies, works at all. Moreover, it points to what we might overlook, in the midst of the lament over Senator McCarthy and horror comics. Namely, that there is a levelling-up as well as a levelling-down. It does not amount to a cultural renaissance: the spectacle even dismays some observers. But it is a fact to be reckoned with. For some time the philanthropic foundations have given lavish support to programmes of academic research; while non-academic intellectuals have been able to hope for a Guggenheim award, or a peaceful interlude at colonies like Yaddo and MacDowell. Among more recent evidences are the surprisingly general acceptance of modern art (though not by Congressmen), the growth and popularity of art galleries and amateur art-activities, the vogue for summer literary conferences and creative writing courses, the large sale of publications like *New World Writing*, the smaller but still

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impressive sale—in new paperback editions—of authors ranging from Kierkegaard to F. R. Leavis, the quantity of severely intellectual quarterly publications. Here, *avant-garde* and *clerisy* merge. Universities maintain drama departments and poets-in-residence, and arrange with large business firms to run courses for their employees at a flatteringly high level. The holders of some junior executive jobs are expected to have post-graduate degrees. The years of formal education prolong themselves: graduate schools ramify. More and more Americans attend college: roughly two-thirds of Jewish high-school graduates subsequently enter college, one-third of the Protestants, and one-quarter of the Catholics. The notion of informal education, long popular among American women, has been taken up by men also.

THE results of all this cannot be very convincingly estimated. For one thing, they are still in process. For another, it is now 1955, and the college graduates of this year were not born until the start of the New Deal. To them it lies in the improbable zone between autobiography and history. Unless they are homosexuals, they will not be in danger of dismissal as security risks. Perhaps the inter-war years were an "untypical" departure from the usual American historical situation, where there were few fast dyes and the categories ran into one another. Or perhaps the self-awareness of the intellectual has extended to the whole nation—which has always been addicted to examining itself. At any rate, the intelligent American now has a kind of sociological detachment—very different from the old truculence. With attendant nudges from columnists and commentators, everything is laid bare: trends in business, fashions in art, inmost mental processes. But laid bare for its own interest, not as muckraking or exposé. No doubt Europe shows similar symptoms. Yet it has nothing quite like the current American intellectual texture—lumpy, laconic, conformist, irreverent, rigorous, cheap, down-to-earth, and on the lookout with a visionary eagerness for another programme, so as to absorb it for a generation in the continuous task of self-discovery.

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I. A. Richards

Indian Lyrics

[Prefatory Note by the Author:—Aristotle and the Buddha, though poles apart, recommended something describable as the Middle Way; but did not themselves pursue it. Yet without such, how could we balance our self-esteem with our humility?

That Other Shore, or Farther Bank, is the realm of ultimate truth and transcendental reality in contradistinction to This Shore—the bank on which we are standing, moving and talking, fettered by desire, subject to suffering.—Heinrich Zimmer: *Myths & Symbols in Indian Art and Civilisation.*

"*Here or Nowhere is America.*"—Goethe.]

A : B :: B : C.

Still Golden is the Mean,
Golden the Mean,
Noble the *Eight Fold Path*, the *Middle Way*
Across the earthly Scene,
These eddying Depths between;
Though They,
The *Master* and the *Lord*,
Who taught men so, found each a different ford.

The Master of those who know
(Defining thus *to know*)
Set up his Self-Regarding Orb for us to gaze at
Desiring which we grow
More like it. Even so.
Was that
The *Practice of the Mean*?
Conduct for men who should not overween?

And He, the *Awakened One*,
Forsaking Wife and Son

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Risked All upon his own unholpen Will
To kill each spark (*or Sun*)
Whereby men seek or shun
Until
The very Seed of Sorrow
Desire itself, cut off its own to-morrow.

Can men like these be seen
Stepping a Mean?
Were they not Gods, *godless as Gods*, again?
Setting aside the *Screen*
Re-entering the *Serene*?
Yet when
Were any who essayed
What such exorbitance would win betrayed?

Still depths askantly eyed
Our prudent steps beside—
Staying the promise of Hope with the threat of Fear—
Assign poor human Pride
Its Scale, thus rectified
To Hear:
All *Comprehension* is to our wise Guess
As that in turn to random *Senselessness*.

LANDFALL

Those Masters of that Farther Shore
Timeless at length,
Forget all time
And all o'ercome before:
Lost is the Life and lost the Loss
And the journey across.

Benign, insuperable, Sublime,
They have the Strength
In Life to kill it
While up its dying boughs they climb.
Yet when they're there they know
It was none of it so.

No Life, no struggle to unwill it,
No length or Strength,
No Voyage and no Shore,
No yonder
And no here,

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No less, no more,
No Law, no errors to fulfil it,
No Climb, no World, no World-forsaking
And no Awakening.
All Worth
Dissolved in Mirth—
All they knew, with all that knew, is gone
The Scene, the Stage such things might linger on.

THE THRONE

Not Eve herself is more
Than these *Far-Shoremen* are
The placard of a Dream
Set up this side the Stream
—Here, on this Hither Shore—
Man's hopes and aims to bar
And scenery to mar.

Nor is it less Desire
—The burning hand and eye—
Designs these *Posters* here,
In outcries of despair:
"Put out, put out the Fire!"
Our *Selves* to twist awry
And Destiny deny.

The *Tongue*—itself a flame
And hotter when it's still—
Heats the insurgent *Heart*
—Silent on either part—
Until white lit to claim
Through the usurping Will
Old shoes they cannot fill.

Not so the Lotus Throne
Or Who *dream-wakes* thereon
See now between the Two
—Look we both at and through
Bronze or lacquer or stone—
Within the *hither and yon*
Seeker become the Known.

TANTALUS

O tongue-tip hung the word sublime
  Would sum-up all All would have said
While temples tumbled on through time
  And tombs were buried with their dead.

Chance shakes none that; but—know no doubt—
  Design alone will not avail.
Though their each move be worked right out
  The servants of my servants fail;

And they I am. What we have been
  Stands there to limit what we tell
Unless, unless . . . that random scene
  Re-utter us and all be well.

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Robert Liddell

Flying from Istanbul

THE HYMNS of other travellers to the beauty of Constantinople linger in one's ears. Tournefort said that human language was powerless in front of it; Gautier could not believe that what he saw was real; Pouqueville thought himself in another world; a German visitor said that the most beautiful illusions of youth, the dreams of first love, were poor and insipid compared with the delicious sensation he felt at the first sight of these charmed shores. Kinglake, as often, was lyrical: "Even if we don't take a part in the chaunt about 'Mosques and Minarets,' we can still yield praises to Stamboul. We can chaunt about the harbour; we can say and sing that nowhere else does the sea come so home to a city; there are no pebble shores—no sand bars—no slimy river beds—no black canals—no locks nor docks to divide the very heart of the place from the deep waters; if being in the noisiest part of Stamboul, you would stroll to the quiet side of the way amidst those cypresses opposite, you will cross the fathomless Bosphorus; if you would go from your hotel to the Bazaars, you must pass by the bright blue pathway of the Golden Horn, that can carry a thousand sail of the line. You are accustomed to the gondolas that glide among the palaces of St. Mark, but here at Stamboul it is a hundred-and-twenty-gun-ship that meets you in the street. Venice strains out from the steadfast land, and in old times would send forth the chief of the state to woo and wed the reluctant sea; but the stormy bride of the Doge is the bowing slave of the Sultan—she comes to his feet with the treasures of the world—she bears him from palace to palace—by some unfailing witchcraft, she entices the breezes to follow her, and fan the pale cheek of her lord—she lifts his armed navies to the very gates of his garden—she watches the walls of his serail—she stifles the intrigues of his Ministers—she quiets the scandals of his court—she extinguishes his rivals, and hushes his naughty wives all one by one, so vast are the wonders of the deep!"

I wandered day after day from monument to monument, sitting in quiet courts with oriental patience (for I had all the time in the world) waiting for the door to open on the cool beauty of marble and tiles within and, once inside, sitting cross-legged on the thick-carpeted floor, my feet relieved of their shoes. Or I might take a boat on the Bosphorus—a waiter went by with a tray of glasses, clinking them and intoning: "*tchai, tchai, kahve, tchai,*" while I looked out at those fabled shores. Or I might walk along the grand sweep of walls, between the Marble Tower and the Golden Horn; or make yet another visit to St. Sophia, which every time has some further secret to give up. I might (when I could get in) watch the patient work of restoration on the Kahrieh mosaics, or lose myself in the maze of the Covered Bazaars. I often spent the last moments of daylight at some famous view-point, particularly at Pier Lotis' enchanting café, with its splendid panorama of the walls and of the Golden Horn.

But travellers to Constantinople belong to two schools of thought, and I belong to both of them: there are those who deeply admire

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the wonderful city, and those who are continuously unhappy there. The last is a personal reaction, but reasons can be found for it.

The first reason is physical, the damp that rises from the three seas: on summer evenings, when the heat makes it intolerable to sit indoors, the damp makes it intolerable to sit out-of-doors whether one suffers the miasma of the Golden Horn as one watches the waxing moon over Stamboul from the Rue des Petits Champs or thereabouts, or whether one suffers the miasma of the Bosphorus as one watches the moon wane over Asia from Taxim, or one of the garden-restaurants below it. Only the islands are free from this, and they are far away. Another physical trial is the wind that blows down from the Black Sea, and, swirling round street-corners, puffs finely powdered dung in your face.

The second reason is spiritual: the profound melancholy of a city that has died twice. Through the ages, even when the city was only decaying, travellers have felt this: the lyrical Kinglake speaks of "the dreary monuments of past power and splendour." A city totally dead, like Delos or Jerash, need not be sad; a small town that has lost its importance, and become "quaint," may be a haven for the spirit—a port from which the sea has receded, a spa where no one drinks the waters any more, a small market town by-passed by the road of progress. Constantinople is too thickly populated to be regarded as a ruin, and too big to have become "quaint." Its sadness is there all the time: *fuit.* Cemeteries surround it, and it is full of images of death: I measured the passing of time by observing black-edged notices of the "forty days' mind" appearing posted on the walls, with the names of people whose funerals I had earlier seen announced in the same place. No doubt it matters very little where one dies, but Constantinople is one of the very few places that I have felt I must, at all costs, leave alive: other people have told me that they have felt much the same thing.

The third reason is more personal: the sub-Greek world, places like Constantinople and Alexandria that have been and still partly are Greek, fill me with an unbearable nostalgia for real Greece, for the clarity of Attica and of the Ægean. There should be a word that is exact and yet can be used in a slightly derogatory way, bearing the same relation to "Greek" that "British" bears to "English." The answer to "What do they know of England, that only England know?" is "Everything that matters." A similar judgement might be made about Greece and the Greek world of the dispersion. To a nostalgic Philhellene, Cairo is more agreeable than Alexandria, and Broussa than Constantinople.

The fourth reason, which almost every traveller has found cogent, is the peculiar hatefulness of Pera. That is where one is almost condemned to live, where one must return every evening, with a sinking heart, after long hours among the monuments of Stamboul. Whirled dangerously in a taxi, frequently threatened with head-on collisions, or grinding more securely in a tram, one scales the steep hill under the Dark Tower. "*This city builds a horror in my brain. . . .*"

"The spleen of Pera" must have been an even greater affliction in the day when Christians could not safely visit Stamboul except with the escort of a Janissary, a "Christian pig-keeper."

THE spleen, the vapours, accidie then had all day to work their havoc upon the visitor. Now the day need only begin and end there. But each day does not end with sleep. "The nightingale of Athens," or some other musical attraction, seems to go on all night in the garden-restaurants; and, long after midnight, men come with pickaxes and attack the cobbled streets, only ceasing from their labour when the trams begin to grind again. Nightly, for I do not know how long, the cobbles under my window were taken up, and laid down again. The first day I congratulated myself on the thought that the workmen must now move further down the street: not a bit of it. Was it sheer inefficiency, I wondered, had they left their tools buried by mistake, was it a ritual, or a hunt for buried treasure? After a while I wondered if it were calculated cruelty.

All day, and much of the night, trams grind noisily up the steep streets, almost sweeping you off the narrow pavements. The architec-

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ture is unrelievedly hideous. The signs in neon lighting strike a peculiar and personal chill into my heart; for Turkish (which I do not know) bears such a marked likeness to Finnish (which I do not know either). I could almost fancy myself in Helsingfors, which would be worse. One day the radio in my taxi played *Mandatemi un poco di Milano*, and I almost wept with nostalgia for a place that I have only been through in a train.

At night, when Stamboul is a dark necropolis, Pera is dimly lighted enough, except in the Taxim Square and the Grande Rue de Pera; here the pavement is broader, and down sweep the ugly, unfriendly faces, four in a row. It is almost a comfort to find how unimportant politics really are in personal relations: in hostile Egypt, almost anyone would be kindly and helpful to a stranger, in friendly Turkey a stiff, proud xenophobia seems to be endemic—nor, in this once cosmopolitan city, where ten languages were spoken in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's household, does anyone seem to speak anything but Turkish.

"Habit remembered," I have read, "is happiness," so I tried to order my day by habits: breakfast in a Greek confectioner's, dinner in a White Russian restaurant which was pleasant before the war—now the courtyard is built-over, and it is stifling—an evening sitting on a terrace overlooking the Golden Horn, drinking light Turkish beer. "The nightingale of Athens," or someone else sang:

"On an evening when it rained. . . ."

And I tried to read Boswell or the Brontës, saving up *Villette* as a treat and as a refuge, in case "the spleen of Pera" became more than I could bear.

Nevertheless, Pera is very easy to get out of. There can be few cities so large and complicated as Constantinople that are so easy to find one's way about in, and where the communications, though disagreeable, are so good. The three seas that wash the city are all thoroughfares: from the suburb of Beshiktash, near the tomb of Barbarossa, one can take the ferry to Scutari, or a Bosphorus steamer. Bosphorus travel is a little complicated, needs some working out, for steamers generally hug either the European or the Asiatic shore, only crossing once or twice. And from the Galata bridge there are ferries to other Asiatic suburbs, boats to the islands, and the Golden Horn boat.

By land, there is a network of trams, and at many tram stops there is a most useful map posted. The traveller who has, as he should have, M. Mamboury's invaluable guide-book, can easily find the "*points de repère*" from which the monuments are to be sought: the square of Eminönü, the mosque of Sultan Ahmet, the square of Bayazit, the mosque of Fatih, Aksaray, the Adrianople gate, or Yedikule and the Seven Towers. With a map, there is little that is hard to find; and, if you are lost in some distant purlieus of the City, soon there will appear a *dolmusz* ("stuffed") taxi, in which you can take a seat, and it will bring you back to some centre, or to Pera.

AND though sleep in Constantinople is too often short and disturbed, food is rather good. Not only in famous restaurants such as Abdullah's, in the Grande Rue de Pera, where you can eat Circassian lamb and other delicious oriental dishes; nor Pandeli's, in the Fish Market, nor the restaurants of Prinkipo where the langouste, or the sword-fish grilled on skewers (with bay-leaves between the pieces), are beyond praise, but even in quite humble eating-places you can, if you order judiciously, eat very well indeed. Often under the shady trees near the Covered Bazaars I have had a simple and admirable luncheon: a cold green pepper stuffed with a pilaff to which dill, currants and pine-nut kernels have been added, followed by a yellow yoghourt from Kandlidja, as good as Cornish cream. There I have sat, watching the coffins come out of the mosque of Bayazit, or the pigeons picking at grain and millet in the square. It is also pleasant and cool to have luncheon in the restaurant from which you can look down into the bustle of the Egyptian bazaar, while you eat your *shish kebab*. As any sort of lump of meat is a *kebab*, and an Irish stew could be correctly so described, it is as well to learn the different names from a phrase-book, to avoid disappointment: a *shish kebab* is skewered and grilled, with onion or

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tomato between the pieces. Everywhere fish is good, and fruit delicious.

Sandys, perhaps English in his tastes, unduly despised Turkish food. "Their most ordinary food is pillaw, that is, Rice which hath beene sod with the fat of Mutton. Pottage they use of sundry kinds, egges fried in honey, tansies (or something like them), pasties of sundry ingredients: the little flesh which they eate is cut into gobbets, and either sod, or rosted in a fornace. But I think there is more in *London* spent in one day then is in this City in twenty. Fish they have in indifferent quantitie. But the commons do commonly feed on herbes, fruits, roots, onions, garlicke, a beastly kind of compressed cheese that lyeth in a lumpe; hodgpodges made of flower, milke, and honey, etc., so that they live for little or nothing, considering their fare and the plenty of all things. . . . Their usual drink is pure water, yet have they sundry sherbets (so call they the confections which they infuse into it) some made of sugar and lemons, some of violets and the like. . . ."

In the markets, and elsewhere, the cake-shops often provide the only oriental note; particularly among the groceries and haberdashery and neon lighting of the Egyptian bazaar. The basis of Turkish confectionery is honey, nuts, and papery pastry—it is only for people with a very sweet tooth, but it looks nice. There are *cadaifs*, a sort of shredded wheat, soaked in honey and sprinkled with nuts; *ravani*, sponge cake soaked in honey or syrup; *baklava*, a spiced nut cake between layers of pastry, and *bourrek* (which I very much dislike), lumps of custard enclosed in pastry.

All over the city are stalls or shops for soft drinks: they look a little like miniature chemists' shops with their big bottles, green bottles of lemonade, red of visinade (cherry juice), yellow of orangeade, or of an apricot drink, white bottles of *ayran* (whipped yoghourt)—every bottle stoppered with a large lemon. Sometimes there are brown bottles of tamarind, which I find very nasty; but I have seldom gone to bed in Constantinople, to face another night of grinding trams and of pick-axes, without a final glass of *ayran*.

Another compensation of the City is that, though so unlike Oxford, it is "branchy between towers." The Moslem love of gardens has produced here nothing so beautiful as the riverside gardens of Cairo, but the shady walks of the garden below the Serail are attractive in themselves, not only because they conceal the column of the Goths, and part of an ancient cistern, and offer the modern amenity of a bathing-place. Here there is a splendid view of the entry of the Bosphorus, and the ships anchored in it. Even the simple little garden of the Fanar, where caiques bob up and down at the edge of the Golden Horn, lingers gratefully in the memory, though one looks across into squalour on the other side.

THE first court of the Serail, too big to be felt as a court, is green and leafy; a breeze comes from the Marmora, and from this hill-top there is a good view of Scutari and the islands. Here, temporarily weary of sight-seeing, one can sit down to rest on one of the old cannons round St. Irene. The Hippodrome, round the corner, is also a pleasant if rather formal public garden, with pollarded acacias down either side.

Any distant view shows the branchiness of the city. As well as public gardens, and deliberately planted avenues, there are the old "sunk gardens" that fill the Byzantine open cisterns: those of Aetius, Aspar, Mocius, and others. Some of the burnt quarters of the City have been allowed to become rural and, as in late Byzantine times, the enclosure of the walls is no longer fully built over: there are orchards, and villages among them, within the Theodosian walls—they stretch most of the way up from the Silivri Gate to Top Kapou. Everywhere there are unexpected market gardens: they fill most of the site of Blachernae. But the market gardens and the "hollow gardens" of the cisterns are dusty and dreary, though in early spring their blossom and fresh greenness must lend a grace to very ungracious parts of Constantinople. (Judging from the charming post cards on sale at photographers' shops, the city is always white either with fruit blossom or with snow—I am very glad that I have never seen it in the latter aspect.)

As well as market gardens, Constantinople

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has a great number of vegetable and fruit markets. These have great charm: wandering among them when the sun is low, one feels something of the gentleness and graciousness of the East. Courgettes and aubergines are displayed geometrically, though not quite with the sense of design that I have noticed in Syria and Lebanon. Black and red cherries are decoratively wreathed round the scale on which they are weighed. All kinds of rice, lentils, dried peas or beans or pine-nut kernels are becomingly displayed. There are tall pottles of strawberries, and huge, cart-wheel size, flat baskets of red or white mulberries decorated with little bunches of sweet peas. At night they are sometimes carried, as on a bier, by two men, and lighted with a small lamp.

There must be a cat to every two inhabitants of the city, and an even higher proportion of pigeons. Everywhere the creatures swarm—it is sinful to kill them: the pigeons are much better fed, because it is more amusing to feed them, as well as being a meritorious act. The Eastern hatred of taking animal life is extremely shocking to some English people, whose love for animals finds its most natural expression in "putting them to sleep"; but anyone who has loved an animal must feel gratitude for the way an eastern vet will fight for its life, long after it would have been condemned in England. On the other hand, when animals are not wanted, they are horribly left to die: some thirty years ago, when Constantinople was intolerably dog-ridden, the dogs of the city were collected, over a period of three weeks or a month, and marooned on the waterless island of Oxyaea. The Marmora resounded with their howling, and those who sailed near saw new arrivals being set upon by the others, who tore them to bits and drank their blood. Such a purge had taken place before, in the 17th century. The cats are never such a nuisance or such a danger, and their lives are more secure. Nevertheless I was slightly unnerved by a sight I saw one evening. I was returning from the square of Bayazit to Pera in a *dolmusz* taxi; one of the other passengers was an old woman carrying a big bag. When we reached Taxim, she got down, and let the cat out of the bag, with a cynical laugh.

Apart from the fruit and vegetable stalls, markets and bazaars are disappointing. As in the Mousky in Cairo, there is little that is worth looking at except rugs and embroideries from Persia. Travellers in the past have uttered similar complaints: "Ask for a Turkish carpet," said Clarke, the collector of manuscripts, "you are told you must send for it to Smyrna, for Greek wines—to the Archipelago; for a turkish sabre—to Damascus; for the sort of stone expressly denominated *turquoise*—they know not what you mean; for red leather—they import it themselves from Russia or from Africa." The Covered Bazaars are pleasant enough for a morning's walk, but the importunity of the vendors much exceeds that which you meet in Cairo, and the wares are inferior. One section smells intolerably of hides, like so many parts of Constantinople, and cheap tailors' and haberdashers' shops abound, and diminish the small romance that is left. A shop with the splendid name of "Trezibond Bazaar" sells reach-me-down suits.

With the secularisation and Europeanisation of dress, life is ugly: the Turks are not a beautiful people, and needed the dignity that Eastern dress gave to them. And yet I have sometimes seen signs that the East is not entirely forgotten: I have seen them dance. One day, looking over the courtyard wall of the Suleimanyeh into the sunk street beneath, I saw a piper and a drummer. Boys were dancing in a line—even two little girls standing apart, even a small brother and sister perched up on an unharnessed cart, even fowls (tethered by one leg to the wall) all seemed to be caught up by the wild rhythm. It was something like a Greek *syrtos*, but far more lively. Then they formed up, as for "oranges and lemons," and danced with a hauling-in movement, as if they were drawing in a fishing-line. Another day, in the blazing sun, I saw a builder dancing alone on the rooftop on which he was working. But such gaiety is rare in Istanbul.

Melancholy the city is, for all its splendid exterior: the best skyline in the old world, at least, but within Stamboul there are vast quarters of insignificant ugliness—such stretch all along the tram line out to the gate at Top

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Kapou. Slums are less dense than those of Cairo, but sadder, as slums are worse the further north one gets. Southern dirt is burnt up at once by the sun, and the most repellent dirt I have ever seen is that of Ostro-Bothnia. To me, as to most dwellers in the Byzantine or Ottoman empires, Constantinople is a cold northern city—with heartbreak I would climb its slippery, almost perpendicular hills, whose gutters flowed with urine, or I would slosh down the filthy streets of Aivan Serail or of Galata. Unburnt slums are largely wood-built, black, and depressing, and inviting future fires: these also recalled Finland to me. In the burnt quarters there were often just piles of stone, or new brick buildings had just gone up, and gaped through windowless apertures, or there were hideous concrete blocks. It is a place where there has been no pretence of good building for more than a hundred years.

The art of Constantinople is, more than that of any other place, an escape. It is not the worse for that: it is an escape from the hideous architecture of the modern town, its pickaxe-torn and tram-tormented streets, its filthy foreshores, its stinking tanneries, its ugly faces, and its misery. These were not at all my business, and I had no compunction for escaping them as much as I could. I wish I could have escaped them altogether. But I have more warmth of feeling for the Arabian monuments of Cairo, in whose cool splendour one rests from the noise and heat of the day, not escaping the life of the modern town, to which they organically belong, but refreshing oneself for a return to it: prayer there is still vital, while in Constantinople it is tepid, outside the holy place of Eyyub. A religious monument grows very cold, with the decay of the faith to which it owed its significance; and now that the Cross and the Crescent have learned to live side by side, dreading a common enemy, it does not seem right for Christians to rejoice in the decline of Islam—which is only another gain to infidelity over Deism. It is more conducive to cheerfulness to sit in such a building as the lovely Baghdad kiosque, where there is only the fall of a decadent empire to remember.

All over the town were photographs of the celebrations of the fifth centenary of the Fall; from every other shop, it seemed, the handsome melancholy face of Mehmet II looked from the window, in more or less crude reproductions of Gentile Bellini's portrait—the face that Proust chose for Bloch. It also appeared on the top of boxes of cigarettes. One could not help wondering how the Greeks would really like to have this City, object of so many prayers and vows, and legends of reconquest, now that the Turks hardly seem to value it any more.

No serious person, of course, wishes the poor kingdom of Greece to be burdened with the defence of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. No one who is not a visionary fails to be content that Greece has a strong and friendly power between her and the Black Sea. But in the abstract, apart from all other considerations, would one like Constantinople to be Greek? It would of course be a more pleasant place if it were.

I am too Philhellenic to wish it: to me it is Hellas that makes Hellenes, more than blood or tradition—Bavarian families who have come to Greece with "Otto," can now be regarded as perfectly Greek. And this scrag-end of Europe, this sad, misty Eastern Thrace, an outpost of the Hellenic world, is not Hellas—any more than Aden is England. The Byzantine empire, with its Asiatic rulers, and its Roman heritage, never managed to be so Greek as modern Greece, never had so living a Greek language. It would be sad indeed to see a city with the brilliant light and the sparkling climate of Athens turn into a second capital, while life moved from the Ægean to the Bosphorus. Though it might be gratifying to see St. Sophia and SS. Sergius and Bacchus in Christian hands, it would be very unbecoming if they became an object of dispute between the churches. Moreover, such gratification would be outweighed by the even more rapid decay of the Islamic monuments. We are used to St. Sophia being a museum, and SS. Sergius and Bacchus being a mosque; it would be more horrifying to see Rustem Pacha turned into a café or the Suleimaniyeh into a bath. (I can think of hardly any instance of a mosque being turned into a church, except where it has originally been built as a church.)

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There is no use in wishing to turn back the pages of history, the city has seen the fall of two empires, and now it is moribund. It must always be an inhabited site, it must be important to Turkey that no one else should have it; it is important to all lovers of beauty that its monuments should be preserved, though more and more they may come to seem "the dreary monuments of past power and splendour." It is a place to visit and not to live in, for it is a place that life is deserting: though it has given new hope to refugees from the Balkans, who have found shelter there, most of them plan to go on further to the west.

Sunset is, appropriately, its finest hour—between the heat of the day and the damp of the night. All my memories of that hour are grateful, whether I have passed it at the great view-points of Tchamlidja or Eyyub, the tower of Galata, or above the Adrianople gate or, even more happily, have watched Asia turn from purple to blue, sitting on the water-front of Prinkipo. Even the early Bosphorus sunsets, behind Rumeli Hissar, have a melancholy beauty—watched from the deck of a steamer, or from a *yali* on the Asiatic shore. And even the most rapid of tourists is likely to have a cherished memory of the boat-filled mouth of the Bosphorus turning dark, as one sits on the balcony of the Park Hotel. The *muezzin* leans from a neighbouring minaret, and gives the sunset call to prayer, gently and civilly addressing the apéritif drinkers. "God is great, if I may say so," he seems to cry. It is a pity that Christianity, except in the measured beat of the *Angelus*, does not use a call to prayer: church bells are vaguer in their message. It would be delightful and edifying to hear from a London steeple: "Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places. . . ."

The sunset hour is not long enough; too soon the waters darken, and the damp and noise of the night follow.

I LEFT one day at dawn; my fellow travellers had been all round the Mediterranean, and were exchanging impressions of hotels in Casablanca and Tel-Aviv: some of them, tired with the rapid round, thought they would leave out Athens. They had been whisked round Constantinople in the comfortable buses of a travel agency: I am not sure that they had not chosen the best way of seeing the place.

We drove down the familiar way—a last glance over the Golden Horn from the heights of Pera, a last shuddering look at the Dark Tower of Galata. We went up the Atatürk Boulevard, below the little domes of the Pantocrator, passed beneath the aqueduct of Valens, saw again the hideous mosque at Aksaray, that looks as if it were modelled in lard. We drove through the ugly quarters that stretch out towards Top Kapou, slums of dark wooden houses, or concrete blocks. I gave a backward glance at the land walls, so venerable and so tragic, and then we went on towards the airport, through quiet, green, Metrolandish country.

Extraordinary city—dove-haunted, tram-grating, hide-stinking, tomb-ringed, sea-surrounded. So splendid, and so squalid; so immortal, and so dead. One of the most beautiful cities in the world, one of the most interesting, and one of the most unpleasant. A city that can exercise such fascination, that can inspire an almost superstitious fear but (in me, at least) cannot wake an atom of love.

With no sorrow, but some compunction for not having learned to come closer to it, I left it to fly over the Marmora, that salt lake that is so nearly Mediterranean. We crossed a corner of Anatolia, and there was the Ægean again—and Greece began at Mitylene, with its two deep gulfs. Here was a brightness of colour, a briskness and freshness of atmosphere unknown in the three enclosed seas of Constantinople. Soon Scyros, burial place of Theseus and of Rupert Brooke, was seen in the north, and then we were over Euboea, and the warm red earth of Attica. Behind western hills was Megara from which, so long ago, Byzas and his companions set forth to found their city on the Golden Horn, opposite to Chalcedon "the city of the blind."

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Comment

Divided We Stand

EXCEPT for Albania, which has been isolated since the break between Stalin and Tito in 1948, the Communist states forming the Sino-Soviet bloc occupy a continuous area of territory in Europe and Asia. It extends from the boundary of the "German Democratic Republic," less than 500 miles from the shores of England, eastward to the coast of the Sea of Japan, and from the Arctic Ocean southward to the line of demarcation between North and South Vietnam. This vast area, which now encloses over a third of the population of the globe, consists of two zones: the first, identical with the Soviet Union inside its frontiers of 1939, represents the range of Communist power between the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the outbreak of the Second World War; while the second comprises all those countries and sections of countries which have been subjected to Communist dictatorship since 1939, either by the direct action of Soviet armed forces or by internal revolutions assisted by the Soviet Union. The outer edge of the whole area is, from a Communist point of view, merely a temporary line soon to be surpassed by fresh advances in a process that has been pre-ordained by history. For those nations, on the other hand, who are recalcitrant to domination by the new self-appointed saviours of mankind, it is the frontier of "containment," a boundary which must be defended against all further encroachment.

Yet, if that were all, the issue would be a simple one for the Western powers, however difficult the actual decisions of policy to be taken. A nation may choose to resist or not to resist, to combine with other like-minded nations for common defence or to take its chance alone, but as long as it is a question merely of defending one's own or one's ally's country against military invasion by Communist states, the choice is a clear one. The complications and perplexities with regard to the principle of containment arise when policies have to be formulated to deal with internal subversion or situations of civil war in other countries. Nations A and B may, if they choose, conclude a defensive military alliance with each other and undertake to maintain each other's territorial integrity and independence. But if B is split between factions holding different parts of its territory, is A justified in allying itself with one of them, however hostile to A the other faction may be? Does not such action constitute interference in another country's internal affairs?

There are at present four countries divided territorially between two rival governments, one of them Communist and the other not. As a result, the line of containment cuts through these four countries. They are Germany, Korea, China, and Vietnam. In two of these countries, namely Germany and Korea, the larger half, reckoned in terms of population, is under the control of the non-Communist governments; in China, on the other hand, only a fragment of the national territory (leaving out of consideration for the moment the question whether Formosa can be regarded juridically as a part of China) remains to the non-Communist government, and in Vietnam less than half.

The Balance of Forces

THE military forces involved in the divisions of these four countries vary widely in composition and degree of commitment. Armies of the four Great Powers which originally took part in the post-war occupation of Germany still remain there, standing guard over the West and East German governments respectively; among the Germans themselves

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only the Communists, through the specially selected and indoctrinated military units of the *Volkspolizei*, have at present armed forces of their own, as distinct from police. In Korea, since the truce which ended the three years war in the peninsula, United Nations and Chinese Communist troops remain on guard in South and North Korea respectively, but among the Koreans themselves, in contrast to Germany, both sides are already armed to the limit of their capacity, and the South Korean army is considered now to be stronger than that of the North. In China the Nationalist forces are overwhelmingly outnumbered by the Communists, and Formosa would no doubt have fallen by now but for the protection extended to it by the United States. In Vietnam there are still French troops south of the demarcation line fixed by the Geneva agreement, but the Vietminh forces are at present restrained from overrunning South Vietnam, not so much by any power arrayed against them, as by the belief that they will be able to take over the country simply by mobilising the superior voting strength of North Vietnam at the nation-wide elections next year.

Thus, the three principal Western Powers, supported by NATO, are committed to the defence of the German Federal Republic; the United States, with conditional support of the members of the United Nations which took part in the Korean war, is committed to the continued defence of South Korea; the United States alone is committed to the defence of Formosa; and nobody is as yet committed to the defence of South Vietnam, though the United States has been showing a lively interest in what goes on there. In Germany, China, and Vietnam, though not any longer in Korea, it is probable that the Communists would today have the upper hand if the situation were to be resolved purely in terms of civil war without direct intervention of foreign forces on either side.

Prospects of civil war, however, cannot be regarded even in these hypothetical conditions as the result of purely internal developments, for the relative strength of the forces concerned is in each case partly determined by the previous policies of other states. If today East Germany is armed and West Germany is not, it is due to the fact that the Russians over a period of several years have raised and equipped Communist Party troops in their own occupation zone, whereas the Western powers did nothing to arm any Germans in their zone; and the belated agreements for the creation of West German divisions—commonly known, through the ineptitude of Western political publicity, as "the rearmament of Germany"—into a tangle of ratification difficulties ran. In Korea a major war resulted from the fact that the Americans, after withdrawing from their post-war occupation zone, deliberately withheld heavy armaments from the South Koreans in order to restrain them from attacking the North; the inevitable consequence of this was that, when the clash came, the North, having been provided with such weapons by Russia, overwhelmed the South. The South Korean army today, on the other hand, is heavily armed, and is only restrained from invading the North because it dare not go to war against Communist China without American support.

In China the Communists do not have to depend on China's own capacity to produce arms; as an ally of the Soviet Union, the People's Republic has been massively armed from Russian factories over the past five years with weapons which Chinese industry is not yet able to provide. The Chinese Communist air force is a Soviet creation; without it Peking would not be able to give its army the air cover necessary for a seaborne invasion of Formosa, and the Nationalists would have a good chance of holding out in their island strongholds even without American naval protection. Similarly in Indo-China, it was the large-scale material aid from Communist China, most of it of Russian origin, which enabled the Vietminh finally to obtain decisive victory over the French. Throughout the Far East the Russian arming of Communist factions which have no independent sources of supply of the heavier modern weapons, invests their revolutions with an international character even when they have not passed over into external war (as in the Chinese intervention in Korea). Nowhere can the balance of forces be assessed as purely internal relations of states in isolation from external factors.

Non-intervention and Fifth Columns

THE idea of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries is a liberal conception—or, rather, it is a convention of international law as developed in relations between

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monarchical states and subsequently modified by liberal-democratic theory. It implies that all international relations are between unitary states, each one of which is a single compact entity, so that they can only act on one another externally, as in the collision of two billiard balls. When international relations were essentially between autocratic rulers with powers of final decision in all matters of policy, the unity of the state was very concretely embodied in an individual human being; diplomats might be very interested in the conflicts among his courtiers or in disaffection among his subjects, but it was recognised that instigation or support of domestic treason against him in time of peace was incompatible with friendly diplomatic relations with the monarch himself. Nor, after the end of the age of the wars of religion, was there an adequate reason for permanent support of internal subversive forces in other states; it was only in time of war that governments took advantage of movements of disruption in rival countries, as when France gave assistance to the revolt of the American colonists against Britain without having any ideological sympathy for the principles proclaimed in that uprising. When parliamentary governments with a rivalry of political parties within each state replaced political absolutism, the unity of the state became less obvious, but it was still a convention of diplomacy that relations were conducted between existing governments and that diplomats should be extremely cautious in any contacts they might have with opposition (or revolutionary) groups in the countries to which they were sent. For one government actually to instigate or assist armed insurrection against the government of another country was regarded as contrary to international law and might be equivalent to an act of war, even without direct military intervention.

There have been nevertheless, two epochs of modern European history in which internal subversion and the use of "fifth columns" played a large part in international politics. These were the eras of the Reformation and the French Revolution, in both of which ideological conflicts produced cross-divisions cutting through the people of various states, so that each state had its own domestic malcontents sympathetic to, and expecting aid from, a foreign power, but also had its own corresponding actual or potential fifth column in the territory of that foreign power. But after the crises of each of these periods of revolutionary conflict, international relations tended to revert to non-ideological conceptions of "national interest," and in the later part of the 19th century the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries came to be more than ever accepted as a condition of normal and peaceful relations between sovereign governments.

Then came the Bolshevik revolution in Russia and with it the conversion of a powerful state to a doctrine for which interference in the internal affairs of other countries was not merely permissible, but an essential and permanent part of policy. The Marxist-Leninist theory, apart from its socialist objective and special form of party-state political organisation, had—and has—two other fundamental characteristics: internationalism and violence. It conceived of the revolutionary movement as world-wide, with national territories as mere sectors of the fighting front, and postulated a continuing struggle only to be resolved ultimately by force. The liberal idea of states as forming a system in which their domestic social and political systems or religious beliefs could be ignored in their mutual relations, was necessarily repudiated, for states must now be divided ideologically into two "camps," those on one side and those on the other, the Communist and the non-Communist. In liberal theory, the conflicting economic, strategic, or ethnic-irredentist interests of states might lead them to war, but there was no reason in the nature of things why mankind should be divided into two irreconcilable categories destined to mortal combat; the liberal faith assumed the possibility of curbing or eliminating war through international organisation based on existing states, and both the League of Nations and the United Nations owed their inception to that faith. Marxist-Leninists, on the other hand, cannot—apart from occasional declarations specially designed to reassure "enemy" statesmen and publicists—entertain any such idea. For them there is no way out of the struggle preordained by "history," nor can that struggle be contained within the limits set by national constitutions or "bourgeois" international law. Lenin once reversed the famous dictum of Clausewitz by explaining to his followers that peaceful agreements with bourgeois states or parties were merely the

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waging of war with them by other means, and were in any case never intended to be permanent.

The organisation for coordinating the world-wide activity of the movement was, of course, originally the Comintern, and as long as this body remained openly in existence, it meant that the Soviet Communist party was directing subversive forces aimed at the internal weakening or violent overthrow of foreign states with which, as the Soviet Government, it was supposed to be in normal diplomatic relations. The existence of the Comintern was indeed the greatest obstacle to the full recognition of the Soviet Union by Western powers after the end of the civil war in Russia—recognition by the United States did not come until 1933—but in the end Western governments decided that the advantage of diplomatic relations with Russia required a blind eye to be turned to a situation which was intolerable by previously accepted standards of international relations. The tacit agreement not to notice the duplicity of the dual Soviet-Comintern policy was made easier by the failure of the Comintern actually to bring off revolutions outside the Soviet Union in the two decades between 1919 and 1939; it seemed to be an animal whose bark was very much worse than its bite. Further, when Stalin began to form military alliances abroad after the rise of Hitler, he found it expedient to put the Comintern in the background and finally to enact its formal dissolution. But within a year of the official demise of the Comintern, the expansion of Communism for which it had ineffectively worked in its lifetime began to take place, and leaders of national Communist parties who had signed its act of dissolution became, with the aid of Soviet armies, heads of governments in their respective countries.

The Practice of Intervention

It is often argued that the Allied intervention in Russia in 1918 was a supreme example of interference in domestic affairs, so that the Western democracies have never since then had the right to complain at Comintern or post-Comintern policies. But, whereas revolutionary internationalism belongs to the very essence of the Marxist-Leninist creed, the Allied intervention of 1918 was a sequel to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and in many ways analogous to British and American actions against Vichy France after June 1940; after the collapse of Germany, it was the lack of any justification valid for public opinion in democratic countries that caused intervention to fizzle out in the way it did during the year 1919.

The idea that the Russians had the right to adopt whatever social and political system they chose as long as they did not interfere with other nations was almost universally accepted in Western democratic countries between the wars. Nazi Germany, however, found it profitable politically to proclaim an anti-Communist crusade, while at the same time giving support to fascist parties and movements in other countries in a manner directly copied from the Comintern. The Italo-German intervention in Spain began a new epoch of ideological conflict, with Great Powers ranged on opposite sides in a civil war. The struggle in Spain saw Spanish democracy gradually squeezed out of existence between the forces of General Franco supported by Italy and Germany on the one hand, and a party coalition dependent on the Soviet Union and the Communist International Brigades on the other; while Britain and France, in spite of the strategic threat to their security implicit in a Franco victory, practised the non-intervention to which all the powers concerned were formally committed. Italy and Germany transferred diplomatic recognition to Franco's government at an early stage of the civil war, Britain did so at a time when the Republicans still held a part of the territory of Spain, and France, after considering a plan to preserve Republican rule in the strategic island of Minorca under the protection of the French navy, decided not to take the risk. Subsequently, during the Second World War, Spain remained non-belligerent—except for the contingent sent to fight against Russia—but the sympathies of the Franco régime were never in doubt; and if Spain did not join in war against Britain, it was partly because of her exhaustion after the devastation of the civil war, but even more because of Hitler's decision to go east after the fall of France instead of concentrating his strategy on Britain and the Mediterranean. If the British nation paid no higher price than it did for its official attitude of unconcern towards the Spanish civil war, it must be attributed rather to unpredictable good luck than to any political foresight.

During the last stages of the Second World War and immediately afterwards, Russian

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military occupation was used to hoist Communist parties into power in Poland, East Germany, Rumania, Hungary, and Bulgaria. In Czechoslovakia, which was also for a time under Russian occupation, President Benes chose the path of voluntary submission and allowed Stalin to nominate his Prime Minister; the final transition to a Communist régime was delayed for two years and then took the form of an internal *coup d'état*. In Yugoslavia the Communists had emerged during the war as a powerful military factor in their own right, and Britain, partly for military and partly for political reasons, compelled the king in exile to repudiate his own supporters in the Yugoslav resistance and legitimise the power of Tito; even so, the Partisans were unable to overcome the Chetniks in Old Serbia until the arrival of the Russians. In Greece, on the other hand, the British not merely refused to recognise the seizure of power by the Communist section of the war-time resistance, but intervened by force to prevent it.

The British Government's action in Greece in 1944 was bitterly criticised by a wide section of opinion at home on the ground that it was an interference in Greek internal affairs, and it was disowned by the American Government, which at that time saw no reason for opposing Communism anywhere. But after a further two years of disillusioning experience had enabled American statesmen to learn the alphabet of foreign affairs in an era of international revolution, President Truman promulgated the famous "doctrine" which bears his name and gave it special application to Greece and Turkey, thus bracketing together a country threatened by internal subversion with one which was in danger of cracking under a merely external pressure. In retrospect it is clear that the British intervention of 1944 and the American intervention of 1947 saved much more than Greece itself; had Greece fallen to its Communists, Turkey would have been isolated and would have been forced to submit to at least some Soviet demands, which would have meant a Russian ascendancy over the whole of the Middle East. The British action against the Communists in Greece, in contrast to the acquiescence, and even collusion, in Communist seizures of power elsewhere in Eastern Europe, reflected a belief that vital British strategic interests were at stake and also that intervention in Greece could be made effective. But the reason for intervening at all was that a Communist Greece was expected to be hostile; there was no confidence that it could be rendered friendly merely by being accorded recognition or brought into the United Nations or presented with cocktails at the British Legation.

War and Peace in the East

IN THE recent controversy over Formosa, an editorial in the *Observer* unkindly pointed out that Mr. Attlee had once advocated intervention in the Spanish civil war and had been a member of the Cabinet which did intervene in the Greek civil war. It is certainly not for Mr. Attlee or for Britain to throw stones at the United States for intervening in a civil war. It is true that Britain, having in 1950 accorded *de jure* recognition to the Communist régime in China without waiting to concert a joint policy with the United States, is now precluded in international law from any action in aid of Chinese forces fighting against it. But the United States, having maintained its recognition of the Nationalist Government, is fully entitled to have a defensive alliance with it against a Chinese faction which has not merely expressed the most extreme hostility towards America, but has waged war against the United Nations army in Korea, and particularly against the Americans as the main constituent of that army. Britain, indeed, throughout the whole period of the Korean war from the time of the Chinese intervention, kept up the fiction that there was no war with China, but the British soldiers who were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner by the "Chinese People's Volunteers" in Korea were quite unable to appreciate the peaceful nature of their relations with the People's Republic, and if the British nation officially chooses to indulge in this kind of make-believe, it has no right to insist that other nations do the same.

As far as the Americans are concerned, there has in fact been a prolonged major war in the Far East, in which Korea and the Formosa region have both been "fronts." The difference is simply that the fighting in Korea has been halted by a truce—the terms of which, incidentally, the Chinese Communists have failed to observe—whereas there has been so far no cease-fire in the Formosa Straits, and there has been recently, for the first time since 1950, a serious threat of a Communist offensive on that

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front. The original decision to seal off Formosa by means of the Seventh Fleet was taken by President Truman in connection with the decision to go to the aid of South Korea. Previously American policy had been to refrain from intervention in China even to defend Formosa, and Mr. Acheson's views as expressed at the beginning of 1950 are now quoted by British critics in reproach of current American policy, regardless of the events of the last five years. But all wars create new situations determined by the front-line positions held by each side at the termination of hostilities, and if the Chinese Communists, after inflicting 25,604 casualties on the American armed forces, now find an American obstruction to their "liberation" of Formosa, that is just another result of the war they deliberately undertook in Korea.

The British Government, seriously embarrassed by the dilemma between its alliance with America and its recognition of the Chinese People's Republic, has been making the most of the legal point that Formosa has never been formally retroceded by a peace treaty to China after its fifty years of ownership by Japan. But the question whether Formosa legally belongs to China or not is really irrelevant to the main issue. Suppose Formosa had been pre-war Chinese territory; it would still have been open to the United States to continue recognition of the Nationalist Government as an ally and help to preserve it in Formosa, as a consequence of the war arising from the Communist aggression in Korea. It is not now a question of preventing a new war breaking out in the Far East, but of terminating one that has lasted since June 1950 by applying to the Formosa region the formula on which the Korean armistice was based—that each side should keep what it has, subject to minor territorial adjustments which may be agreed to by bargaining. As Mr. R. T. Paget has put it in a letter to *The Times*:

> The Chinese civil war has resulted in the creation of a new state, Communist China, and has left in being an old state, Nationalist China. Both these states are firmly in control of different parts of pre-civil war China and both give the appearance of permanent establishment with their defined areas. . . . Both Communist and Nationalist China are in my view entitled to international recognition and the sooner both are brought into the United Nations the better.

In every country which is today divided between Communist and anti-Communist governments, there are, indeed, two separate states, each with its own civil service, courts of law, and armed forces. The reunification of these countries can only be brought about either by force or by agreement, but the use of force one way or the other can only bring about further dangers to the peace of the world, and genuine agreement depends on mutual acceptance of a political system in which opposition parties can function. With regard to Germany and Korea, the Western powers have insisted on guarantees which the Communists have declined to give; at Geneva they agreed on nation-wide elections for Vietnam without similar guarantees, but this was because the military collapse of the French left them with no option but to settle more or less on the Vietminh terms. In China it would obviously be useless to expect Peking to modify its totalitarian system, and no voluntary fusion of the Communist and Nationalist régimes can be hoped for. For the time being, therefore, there seems to be no alternative to the co-existence of rival states within the territories of Germany, Korea, and China, and the larger co-existence of the Communist and non-Communist powers can only be established if the *status quo* in all three cases is accepted. The line of containment is the frontier of peace; the attempt to cross it either way means war.

G. F. Hudson

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Films

The Innocence of Marilyn Monroe

THINK of the names Gish, Pickford, Garbo, Dietrich, Harlow, Stanwyck, Bergman, Hayworth. They evoke something more than a face, a voice, a shape, expressions on the face, inflexions of the voice, movements of the shape: they evoke a personality so clearly defined as to embody a mode of feeling, an attitude towards the world, a personality issuing from the fertilisation of natural endowments by a collective wish or ideal current at the time the star was born. It is a personality confirmed by film after film—even by films in which the star may play a character that is out of character, so certain do we feel that this can only be a disguise. For its attributes belong as much to her, and she to them, as love to Venus or wisdom to Minerva. Her personality becomes more tangible than flesh and blood, delivering her from the ravages of time, and making her ageless as a goddess, in that her magic does not die with her beauty but endures as long as what she stands for casts its spell. Conversely, if the ideal she embodies loses its hold, the magic will be drained from her long before her beauty (though she may then be reborn, as Joan Crawford was, on abandoning musical comedy for raging passion, the same in body but renewed in spirit—one might even say, renewed in body, and the same only in name). So much more potent, indeed, is the myth of a star than her physical reality, that she is real even for those who have never seen her on the screen, so real they no longer know whether they have ever seen her.

It is her possession of—or rather her possession by—a clear-cut personality, as limited as it is vivid, that differentiates the star as a species from the actress. From time to time, however, a star appears who is not possessed by a really distinct personality. Generally, as in the case of Anne Baxter, this is because she falls between being a star and being an actress. But lately Hollywood has bred a star who is as surely a star as she is surely not an actress, yet failed to find an ideal she could embody. It has created an ideal Ava Gardner, an ideal Judy Holliday, an ideal Audrey Hepburn, an ideal Grace Kelly, had done so by the time they had starred in a single film. Yet with the brightest star of the cinemascopic era, filmdom's pink-and-white hope in the struggle with TV, Hollywood in this regard has so far failed: there is still no ideal Marilyn Monroe.

In her first starring part, in *Niagara*, Marilyn played a petulant and adulterous wife who is murdered by a jealous husband. Then, in *Don't Bother to Knock*, she played a psychotic waif with tendencies towards murder and suicide who ends up in an asylum. In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, she turned to comedy and played a gold-digger. In *How to Marry a Millionaire*, she was a gold-digger again, but a myopic and vague one, a dumb blonde in glasses. In *River of No Return*, she relinquished comedy and played a part in which she was first a good-bad girl in a saloon, and then a babe in the woods. In *There's No Business Like Show Business*, she has returned to comedy and is a go-getter again. It is clear that, unless this has been achieved in her latest film, *The Seven-Year Itch*, which has yet to be seen here, Hollywood has not found Marilyn a unifying formula.

There was no trouble finding a unifying formula so long as Marilyn was playing minor roles. In *All About Eve*, *Let's Make it Legal*, *Love Nest*, *Monkey Business*, among others, she was the dumb-blonde temptress for whom husbands never quite leave home. It was simply a question of exploiting her outrageous sex-appeal. Yet she was far from being just another Hollywood cutie writ large. The sex-appeal was already qualified by attributes

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which have come to the surface in her starring roles—namely, her evident awareness that there is something rather comical about being provocative, which she shares with Mae West, and, what is the absolute antithesis of Mae West, her apparent innocence of the mechanism by which she is being provocative, in short, her artlessness. In Howard Hawks's comment, "She automatically makes any move, any gesture, insufferably suggestive," the key-word is surely "automatically." As a temptress, Marilyn was at the opposite extreme from a Mae West, a Hayworth, or a Stanwyck: she was a temptress-in-spite-of-herself. One felt that, if husbands really had left home she would have been embarrassed and confused.

It might be supposed that here was a personality already sufficiently individuated for its apotheosis to present no difficulties. In fact, elevation to stardom disintegrated it. The personal attributes have endured, but have been manifest in a fragmentary way. Instead of each new role's confirming the validity of the last and giving the accumulated personality an added force and complexity, each role has to some extent denied the last.

Two reasons suggest themselves for Hollywood's inability to consolidate the Monroe doctrine at stellar level. The first is that the kind of character she was in her supporting parts was necessarily not a central but an attendant figure, "one that will do/To swell a progress, start a scene or two." A star must get her man, or lose him tragically, but for the early Marilyn there were only men to tempt, there was no man to get. The second reason relates to a contradiction between Miss Monroe's looks and her talents. A very clever comedienne, she has yet to act convincingly in a straight part. Yet it is natural that Hollywood should want to give dramatic roles to anyone so outstandingly beautiful. As a consequence they have split her screen personality.

THE essential rift in Marilyn's personality is between the go-getter of her comedy parts and the waif of her straight parts. She first starred in comedy as Lorelei, of *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, and Lorelei has remained the prototype of this side of Marilyn. For the thing about her as a go-getter is that she shares Lorelei's peculiar mixture of business instinct and wide-eyed innocence, of calculation and demureness, of the pursuit of gold and the pursuit of tone. Apart from "diamonds," Lorelei's favourite word is "refined," and the importance for Marilyn of being refined can be gathered from her version of the couplet about girls who wear glasses. "Men aren't attentive/ To girls who wear glasses," she solemnly recites, in *How To Marry a Millionaire*.

Actually, Marilyn partakes far more of Lorelei's distaste for coarseness than of her taste for gold. In *How To Marry a Millionaire*, she doesn't: after finding herself a man-about-town she goes and marries someone less laden with money than with money-troubles. When it comes to the point, diamonds count for less than love. But what kind of love?

It isn't as if the husband she chooses is rich in good looks or brains. Grable and Bacall, her co-stars, get married to highly romantic young men; not so Monroe, for all that she tops the billing. She may get the lion's share of the publicity, but her share of the beefcake is roughly equivalent to that which would have gone to Joan Davis when a trio of girls shared an apartment a generation ago. In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, it is Jane Russell who gets the romantic young man, while Marilyn gets the zany. True, the zany is a millionaire. But it isn't just his millions that she likes: she actually quite likes him. And this is where Marilyn's Lorelei shows her dissimilarity to Anita Loos's Lorelei. In the novel, Lorelei starts off with a rich sugar-daddy who bores her and a romantic lover on the side, and ends up with a rich husband who bores her and another romantic lover on the side. In the movie, Lorelei starts off with a poor little rich man as her fiancé, ends up with the same poor little rich man as her husband, and never has a lover at all.

Even when, in *There's No Business Like Show Business*, she falls in love with a good-looker like Donald O'Connor, Marilyn betrays no signs of romantic passion. His ardour, like that of the others, only makes her feel affectionate and protective, and, by the way, quite faithful. Sexual passion is not for her—except when she makes love to sofas, pillars or microphones in her song-numbers. But when she turns from fetishes to flesh, nothing happens. Marilyn may have become an international symbol for sex but, after all, a dollar-sign is an international symbol for money, and you still can't spend a dollar-sign. Marilyn never lets herself go with a man because, however often she may get engaged, she never feels *engagée*.

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Her refusal to be committed can even take in marriage and children. In a film of her antestellar days, *We're Not Married*, Marilyn was a wife whose time was so much taken up with winning beauty contests that her husband had to stay at home to do the cooking and the housework and take care of baby. This is one of the two movies in which Marilyn has appeared as a married woman. The other is *Niagara*, in which Marilyn for once felt seriously sexy (towards her lover, so leaving room in her relations with her husband for the usual pattern). But as she earnestly wiggled and jiggled her way across the screen, audiences went on laughing—and this time it wasn't with her, it was at her.

MARILYN cannot help but make a joke of sex. And the beauty of the joke is that she never sees it. She is only bewildered by the effect she has. She is quite surprised to find how much Donald O'Connor wants to kiss her, and, having been allowed to do so once, how much he wants to go on kissing her. In the same way, the "real" Marilyn was reported to have been "bewildered," when, as she was walking to work on her first day with Twentieth Century Fox, seventeen cars stopped to offer her a lift. Marilyn, in a word, is an innocent.

It is because of her innocence that Marilyn herself can be made to look as silly as the men who are "attentive" to her. In *How to Marry a Millionaire*, she doesn't only marry a man who wears glasses: she wears them herself. The glasses don't make her look less beautiful, they merely serve as a symbol of the absurd, while their absence renders her actions absurd.

Marilyn's innocence, indeed, is the unifying factor in her divided personality. In her comedy parts, it engenders absurdity in her suitors and even in herself. In her straight parts, it makes her a waif—the poor mixed-up girl of *Don't Bother to Knock* whose anguished efforts to get a man only brings him closer to another woman and herself to the madhouse; or the good little bad girl of *River of No Return* who has to be rescued from the influence of a bad man by a fatherly (if virile) good man together with his small boy, to whom she becomes less a mother than an elder sister.

If innocence is the constant factor in Marilyn's variable screen personality, it appears only rarely in her pin-up personality, which tends to perpetuate that of the girl who posed for the calendar-picture with nothing but the radio on. And this suggests the origins of that innocence. It derives above all from her voice, a voice that cannot sound its r's, has to speak with great care to make any articulate sound at all, is in fact the grave, deliberate, little voice of a child. The innocence can also be found in her face, but only so long as it is seen by the cine-camera, is not hardened and stylised by the still camera, which tends to iron out the softness of the cheeks, the drop of the chin, the surprise in the eyes, the impreciseness of the features, everything that makes it the wondering, translucent face of a child. And so we see that Marilyn is simply the little girl who is aware of her charms, knows that if she flaunts them she can make men look at her in a funny way, and likes it when they do, though she only has a vague idea why they should.

Miss Monroe may therefore be justified in the desire she has lately expressed to play parts from Dostoievsky. For Marilyn would make an ideal victim for Svidrigailov.

David Sylvester

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Letter from NEW DELHI

Reprieve in Andhra

I ARRIVED in Madras the last week in February, after travelling through Andhra during the final round of polling in the State elections. The results of the elections began to be announced from March 1st onward, and—like the rest of the world—I was astonished at the magnitude of the Communist defeat. Did the resounding Congress victory mark the end of the long Communist nightmare in Andhra? It was an attractive idea.

This election has been the nearest approach to a straight fight between democracy and Communism in India; and if, as is widely believed, the issue between the two forces in Asia is going to be determined by the direction India takes, it was certainly tempting to regard the outcome as proof of the preference of free Asians for democracy. Indeed that is how the result has been generally interpreted both in India and outside. But what really has the election proved? Has it registered a decline in Communist influence in Andhra?

Any comparative estimate can only be with reference to the country-wide general elections of 1951–52, conducted for the first time on the basis of universal adult franchise. At that time the eleven Telugu-speaking districts had not been constituted into a separate State. The Communist party contested 67 of the 140 Andhra seats in the Madras Legislative Assembly and won as many as 41, with a total poll of 1·4 million out of the 7·2 million votes that were cast. This was possible because the non-Communist vote was divided between four major parties—Congress, Praja Party, Krishik Lok Party, and Socialists—besides a host of minor parties and Independents. The Congress polled a total of 2·2 million votes but secured only 43 seats.

This time the Communist party put up 159 candidates for the expanded 196-member Andhra Assembly. It has secured 2·7 million votes out of the total poll of 8·6 million, but has gained only 15 seats, while the United Congress Front (comprising all the democratic parties except Socialists) has won as many as 146 seats with a total poll of only 4·3 million. In other words, the Andhra Communists have nearly doubled the number of their adherents during the last three years, while the Congress and its allies, who separately gained a total of 3·9 million votes in the last election, have now unitedly improved their poll by 10 per cent. Under proportional representation the Communists would have 59 members in a House of 196, and the Congress Front only 96 instead of 146. Considering that what matters for the Communist party is not a legislative majority but the ability to incite a determined section of the population to revolt, the demonstration of its hold over 30 per cent of the Andhra voters is surely no matter for jubilation.

Some Congress analysts have tended to make light of the increase in the total Communist poll on the ground that the party contested a much larger number of seats this time, and have even claimed that the Communists have suffered a set-back in the five coastal districts of Andhra which have been regarded as their stronghold. It is true that in the last election the Communist party concentrated its effort in the fertile and prosperous coastal districts known as the Circars where, contrary to the theory that poverty breeds Communism, it is much stronger than in the arid and underdeveloped interior districts of Andhra called Rayalaseema. The Circars gave the Communists 34 seats in the last election and only 15 now. But it should be noted that the Communist poll in these five districts has risen by 50 per cent, from 1,179,000 in 1951 to nearly 1,800,000 this year. In contrast, the parties of the Congress Front

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registered a gain of 25 per cent from 2,043,000 to about 2,500,000.

That is why, public claims apart, Congress leaders admit in private that the election has given the democratic forces in Andhra, not a final victory against Communism, but what they variously call a reprieve or last chance.

IN VIEW of the vast improvement in India's economic climate since the general elections were held at the turn of 1951, it should have been logical to expect the Communist vote in Andhra to be halved rather than doubled. Then the position was that, despite the lingering unpopularity of the Communist party's "People's war" policy and its consequent collaboration with the British while national leaders were in jail, Andhra Communists had endeared themselves to large sections of the people by their enforced good works of the war period. While disdaining the reformist philosophy of the programme advocated by Gandhi, Indian Communists during the last war engaged in precisely such reformist activity, any interference with the war effort being ruled out. In a period of acute scarcities, Andhra Communists filled out applications for rice and kerosene rations for illiterate peasants, and thus earned their gratitude. They demanded liberalisation of the food procurement rules in favour of the small producer, and stringent enforcement against the big landlords many of whom bribed police and civil supplies officials to sell their surpluses in the black market. Communists earned the respect of village elders by diverting the energies of rural youth from gambling and cockfights to healthier forms of entertainment or even to active social service. In those days heads of rich families were known to prefer a Communist youth for a son-in-law, because he could be relied on not to beat his wife or abandon the family for the pub. After the war, when the Party switched to a policy of violent revolt against the Congress Government and decimated its ranks in futile revolts and hunger-strikes within jails, the Andhra unit of the party, lacking any industrial proletariat to throw into the suicidal fray, was among the least damaged. Finally, Communists in Andhra benefited from the prestige of running a parallel government and redistributing land in neighbouring Telangana, without the alienation of local sympathy which the party suffered in Telangana itself as the result of civil strife.

If Andhra Communists thus went to the polls in 1951 with a large fund of popular goodwill, and with abundant material for agitation in the prevailing food scarcity and high prices, the Andhra Congress of that time could not have been in worse shape. Its most prominent leaders had left to form rival parties. Tanguturi Prakasam, the aged veteran beloved of the masses as *Andhra Kesari* (Lion of Andhra), campaigned against the party he himself had built up over decades. Embittered by his removal from Chief Ministership of Madras, he had joined the all-India Praja Party formed by another Congress rebel, Acharya Kripalani. Another Andhra Congress leader, Professor Ranga, similarly chafing at his loss of control of the party machine, left to found the Krishik Lok Party. Both Prakasam and Ranga campaigned on the theme that the people might vote Communist, Socialist, or Independent, but should in any case deny their support to the Congress. The appeal was heard with some sympathy by an electorate, the question before whom was whether they should return to power in Madras a Congress which had discredited itself as much as any ruling party could. The turnover of Chief Ministers in Madras since the resumption of popular rule in 1946 was among the highest in any province, thanks to the unbridled play of personal ambition. Against many members of the successive Cabinets there were charges of corruption, freely made in the press and from public platforms, which were neither challenged for libel nor referred to impartial investigation. The second- and third-rank leaders, who were all that the Andhra Congress was left with, could not even agree on the choice of party candidates. The impression they made on the electorate was as feeble as was to be expected. Only the memory of Gandhi and the popularity of Nehru brought them the votes they polled.

This year, in contrast, the Socialists were the only organised party to stand between the Congress and the Communists. Prakasam left the Praja Socialist Party (a result of the post-election merger of the Praja and Socialist parties) and rejoined the Congress as early as 1953, in return securing Chief Ministership of the newly formed Andhra State. Other members of the Andhra Praja Party did not rejoin the Congress but broke loose from the

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Socialist alliance to support the Prakasam Ministry. Similarly, Ranga's K.L.P. joined the coalition and, though one of its members moved the no-confidence motion which brought the Prakasam Ministry down last November and forced fresh elections, it participated in the United Congress Front formed on the eve of the elections.

With the non-Communist forces (always excepting the numerically negligible Socialists) thus united behind the Congress Front, and in the context of relative prosperity compared to 1951, the only question in the recent Andhra election should have been how many votes—not seats—the Communists would be able to retain. But Congressmen, on the contrary, were worried no end by the fear that the Communists might emerge with more seats than the Front even if they did not gain an absolute majority. In that case it would be difficult to deny them the right to form a Government with the marginal support from Independents which any ruling party can easily secure. This was the prospect which was troubling New Delhi right down to March 1st.

There was good reason why Congressmen, and non-partisan observers concerned for democracy, felt this anxiety. The reason was quite simply that during the thirteen months for which the Congress and its wayward allies ruled Andhra, they had done nothing to earn an increment in the people's affections. Ever since the new State was formed on October 1st, 1953, personal and parochial rivalries claimed the energies of the non-Communist legislators more than did good government. Linguistic unity was the principle for which Potti Sriramulu, a humble Congress worker, had fasted unto death, thereby compelling the creation of Andhra. Yet no sooner was the State formed than it was rent by fierce rivalry between the Circars and Rayalaseema. Unseemly exhibitions of this conflict marked the debates over the choice of the Andhra capital, location of the State's High Court, and even the formation of a new university. With personal and caste rivalries superimposed on this regional conflict, the wonder was that the unstable ruling alliance of the Congress, KLP, and Praja parties lasted even as long as it did. When the coalition broke to pieces last November, Andhra remained one of the few Indian States with no legislation for giving security of tenure to the agricultural tenant or fixing a limit to the rent payable by him to the landlord. Failure to repeal Prohibition, recommended by a committee appointed at the desire of the legislature, was the ostensible reason for the fall of the Prakasam Ministry. But no policy issue was really involved, and the fall of the Ministry was caused by some Congressmen who crossed the floor. The Andhra voter could not be blamed if he regarded with scepticism the eve-of-election zeal of non-Communist politicians for "democratic unity."

IF THE Congress and its allies have nevertheless managed to retain the votes they polled in 1951, it does not denote popular approval of their past performance. What the election does demonstrate is the refusal of the people of Andhra to accept the Communist party as the alternative. The refusal might have been less firm if, during the election campaign, Congress spokesmen had not launched the all-out anti-Communist campaign which they did.

Indeed the Andhra election is a notable event in free India's history for the reason that it made ranking Congress leaders shed the inhibition which the country's "neutral" foreign policy had till then imposed on their criticism of Communism. For the first time they branded the Communist party as an essentially traitorous party, serving the interests not of this country and its people but of the party's Russian and Chinese mentors. Congressmen never did this before, fearing that to talk explicitly of Russia and China as potentially hostile countries might run counter to India's policy of reposing equal trust in, and cultivating equal friendship with, both sides to the Cold War. The departure in Congress policy in the direction of exercising free speech about international Communism is perhaps of wider and more enduring significance than the outcome of the election in Andhra which induced it.

For three years now I have been watching the curious spectacle of Congress back-benchers in Parliament guiltily indulging now and then in anti-Communist expressions of sentiment and looking over their shoulders to see if the Prime Minister was annoyed. Uninhibited anti-Communism was regarded with the same disapproval that is attached to any undignified form of physical indulgence in public: it was a display of bad taste. Political snobbery combined with the influence of Nehru's foreign policy to

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render any talk of international Communism taboo—a taboo which only the naughtier junior Congressmen sometimes violated.

It was a big change from all this when the Andhra people were told that a vote for Communism meant a vote for the loss of both individual and national freedom. The new Congress President, U. N. Dhebar, did not stop with mild disapproval of the Communists' violence coupled with praise of their ideals, as the party's leaders, Nehru downward, have been wont to do. During his long and extensive election tour of Andhra, Dhebar said enough about Communism to relieve the fears of those foreign friends of Indian democracy who have mistaken the self-imposed restraint of Congressmen for ignorance of the true nature of Communism.

It would be a mistake to imagine that the new accent on anti-Communism has been imported into the Congress by Dhebar or others, inspite of Prime Minister Nehru. Apart from the fact that in the Andhra election the Congress was fighting for survival, the new trend is to be attributed to Nehru's deliberate relinquishment of party leadership last December. As long as Nehru was both Foreign Minister and Congress President, he was inevitably under a restraint proper to diplomacy even while speaking from his party's platform. Dhebar, who is steeped in the Gandhian philosophy and is at the same time an experienced administrator and party manager, was practically handpicked by Nehru to succeed him as Congress President. If, therefore, Dhebar says that democracy and Communism cannot coexist in India, one may be sure that he is coining a view which Nehru fully shares but would rather not express himself.

WHILE the Congress' attempt to educate the common man in the true implications of Communism has been a heartening feature of the Andhra election, another feature of the election has been far from heartening. This is the poor showing made by the Andhra Socialist Party, which contested 45 seats and won 13, securing a total of less than half-a-million votes. Nine out of the 13 constituencies it took are in the Vishakapatnam district, the former domain of the youthful Raja of Vizianagaram who leads the Andhra Socialist Party. Almost every family in the district has benefited by the benevolence of the successive Rajas, whose family are noted throughout Andhra for their generous tax remissions and their patronage of education and the arts. If the present Raja had asked the people of Vishakapatnam district to vote for the Congress or the Communists, they would have probably done so with equal alacrity.

The polarisation of politics round the Congress Government and the Communist opposition lays on the former an immensely heavy responsibility in Andhra. As M. R. Masani has remarked in his recent study of Indian Communism:

> The situation is not improved by the fact that many adherents of the Congress party, for their own purposes, chime in with the Communist thesis of polarisation. Their idea undoubtedly is that if the Communists are held out as the only alternative to the present Congress régime, the latter's position becomes unassailable. In actual fact, however, this can only have the effect of canalising all possible discontent against the Congress Government into Red channels, thus helping to create somewhat of the same situation as that in China, where the middle groups were pulverised in the polarisation between the Kuomintang and the Communist party.

Since the deliberate fostering of a rival party is beyond the realm of probability, it can only be hoped that Congressmen will heed the warning sounded by Nehru in a recent message to the party—that it would be a tragedy if the Congress proved itself unworthy of the trust placed in it by the people of Andhra. And Andhra being only an extreme manifestation of the political conditions obtaining throughout India, Nehru's warning would seem to apply to the Congress party in the country as a whole.

G. N. S. Raghavan

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H. R. Trevor-Roper: DESIDERIUS ERASMUS

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS was a scholar who in the early days of printing, sought to give his contemporaries clear and accurate texts of certain neglected works. He retranslated the Bible and edited the Christian Fathers. He also wrote, in his clear, elegant Latin, colloquies, satires, and works of evangelical piety; and he carried on, mainly with scholars, a gigantic correspondence. Offered opportunities of practical responsibility, he consistently evaded them, and in the crisis of his time he appeared to many a timorous neuter. He was neither a courtier in the age of courts, nor a revolutionary in an age of revolution. Though a friend of kings, his ideal society was the republican city-state. In religion, Luther and Rome alike accused him of tepidity. He was not even an admirer of fashionable classical culture: ancient Rome displeased him both by its paganism and by its empire. His personal character was not heroic. He was valetudinarian, comfort-loving, timid, and querulous. He lived in his study and died in his bed.

And yet Erasmus is a giant figure in the history of ideas. He is the intellectual hero of the 16th century, and his failure was Europe's tragedy. For his failure seemed, at the time, immense and final: as immense as his previous success.

Consider his success. Born the illegitimate son of an obscure priest, he rose, merely by his pen, to a position of undisputed supremacy in Europe. Cosmopolitan in an age of awakening nationalism, he was born in Holland, studied in Paris, found his intellectual home in Oxford, took his doctorate in Savoy, travelled to Germany and Italy, published his works impartially in Louvain, Paris, Venice, and Basel, and had disciples throughout Europe. When he travelled, customs-officers treated him as a prince, princes as a friend. The royal bastard of Scotland was his pupil, the King of Poland his correspondent; the King of Portugal tried to lure him to Coimbra, the King of France wrote twice, and in his own hand, to tempt him to Paris. He was offered professorial chairs in Bavaria and Saxony, bishoprics in Spain and Sicily. The Emperor made him his Privy Councillor, the Pope offered him a cardinal's hat. His disciples formed a European élite: they included, he once proudly wrote, "the Emperor, the Kings of England, France, and Denmark, Prince Ferdinand of Germany, the Cardinal of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and more princes, more bishops, more learned and honourable men than I can name, not only in England, Flanders, France, and Germany, but even in Poland and Hungary. . . ." Such was the fame of Erasmus in 1524, when it was almost at its peak.

Twelve years later, his failure seemed complete. The great crisis of the Reformation had split his followers and Popes and Princes could not help him. To save his independence, Erasmus had declined their gifts, avoided their courts, and fled to die in a republican city in Switzerland. He died defeated, foreseeing the future. Soon his name and works would be condemned, his disciples persecuted, his patrons unavailing. "If that is a crime," protested a Spanish thinker whom the Inquisition accused of having corresponded with Erasmus, "it is a crime committed also by many great princes, many men of all conditions in all countries . . . among whom I see the Pope, our Lord the Emperor, and most Christian princes, as well spiritual as secular. . . ." It was in vain. By mid-century Erasmus had become a heretic. In Catholic countries it was dangerous even to have known the last great thinker of united Catholic Europe.

How did this great tragedy come about? For

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it was a real tragedy, not only of one man but of a whole generation. The disciples of Erasmus, in the early 16th century, were the spiritual and intellectual élite of Europe. There is scarcely a great name in those years which is not among them. They were the saints, the humanists, and the reformers who, by their universal diffusion, might have created a new Europe but were in fact swallowed up in the great and widening gulf which they had sought to bridge. To understand this tragedy of a generation it is not enough to study their leader only. We must consider the century which produced both him and them.

IN THE 14th century the decline of Medieval Europe began. The great age of medieval industry, medieval art, the medieval Church was then over. Particularly of the Church, whose vitality then began, as it seemed, a long, uninterrupted ebb. This spiritual ebb was accompanied by other developments. First, the wealth of the Church was increased. New religious orders were not founded, but the old became increasingly rich and none more arrogant, more ostentatious of their wealth, than the former 'Mendicant' orders, the Franciscans and Dominicans. This increasing wealth of the Church led, as a natural consequence, to greater aristocratic control. The system of 'commendation'—"the leprosy of the Church" as Montalembert called it—made the Church, in the 15th as in the 18th century, into "a system of outdoor relief for the upper classes." Hence those aristocratic teen-age bishops, those highly promoted papal bastards who so enliven the history of the pre-Reformation Church. Meanwhile, as spiritual life ebbed away from religion, new forms of piety were developed upon its arid crust. In the schools, Thomism triumphed: a mechanical dissection of dead doctrine; among the people 'works' replaced 'faith': mechanical devotions—pilgrimages, veneration of images and relics, ostentatious ceremonies, and finally, the sale of indulgences. Genuinely religious spirits turned away from this oppressive incrustation of religion to an inner mysticism. It was not for nothing that the 15th century was the great age of mysticism. Mysticism, as so often, was the refuge of the defeated.

But Christianity was not everywhere defeated. Sporadically, throughout Europe, the evangelical protest was raised. In England the Lollards appealed to — and translated — the Bible. In Medicean Florence, the new Platonists, Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, challenged the formalism of the schools, and Savonarola, the puritan friar, preached his crusade against the mechanical 'works' of religion. In the other great centre of European wealth, the Netherlands, Gerard Groote founded the evangelical order of the Brethren of the Common Life, whose new primitive Christianity spread through the monasteries of Northern Europe and produced the greatest mystical work of the century, *The Imitation of Christ.* But all these remained local movements, doomed (it seemed) to local extinction. By the end of the 15th century the Lollards had been crushed in England, Savonarola had been burnt in Florence, and the Brethren of the Common Life remained rude and parochial in their Northern simplicity. None of these were able, by themselves, to mobilise the scattered forces which demanded the reform of the Church.

For all over Europe there were practical men eager to reform both the Church and society. Princes, noblemen, officials, clergy, lawyers, scholars asked only to be inspired and used. Already serious efforts had been made within the Church itself, but the machinery was clogged by its own vested interests, against which even a reforming Pope was to prove helpless: the prisoner of his own patronage and the powerful monastic orders around his throne. Other reformers obtained local successes by invoking the lay power: which however had dangerous appetites. So Cardinal Ximenes in Spain, thanks to royal support, was able to purge monasteries, to reduce papal patronage, to advance Biblical study, and to found the new humanist university of Alcalá. But Ximenes was exceptionally fortunate: generally these early reformers were broken by the impossibility of their task or achieved success only among a few disciples. They remained a scattered minority of enlightened men in an apathetic or hostile world. Then Erasmus appeared and gave them, not a constitutional programme but a message, not new machinery but a new spirit. He turned the disconnected reformers into an army which seemed—for a time—invincible.

How did he do it? One technical advantage which he possessed must not be overlooked. Erasmus had the good fortune to coincide with

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the spread throughout Europe of the printing-press, first used ten years before his birth. The great printers of his time were his natural allies. They were scholars and humanists, members of that educated urban patriciate from which the reformers naturally sprang. Thierry Martens of Louvain was a pupil of the Brethren of the Common Life; so was Josse Badius of Paris, who had also studied in Italy; and Aldus Manutius of Venice was a humanist and a Greek scholar. These men, his publishers and friends, lent their services to Erasmus and his contemporaries as they could not have done to his predecessors. The printing-press, coinciding as it did with a European Church, a European movement of reform, and an international language, gave to the educated classes a weapon of sudden, miraculous potency: a new way to learning, to the Scriptures, even to heresy, by-passing the control of the Church. The age of Erasmus was that golden age which lay between the European discovery of printing and the invention of its antidote, the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*.

But of course this was not the only reason for Erasmus's success. Erasmus did not go to the printing-press: the printing-press came to him. He was the first modern best-seller, the first great writer whose works publishers competed to commission, to print, and to distribute. They did so because he had discovered as none other had done, a universal idiom. Behind his lucid, nimble, pungent style he had united the intellectual appeals of all the reformers: Lollard Biblicism, Dutch piety, Italian scholarship, and Florentine Platonism. Fusing all these he had made them into one message. And finally, there was his irony, which carried that message everywhere. Like Pascal after him, he discovered that in moral questions it is not earnestness but irony that kills.

THIS great achievement, the uniting in one cosmopolitan message of the various local protests of the 15th century, occupied Erasmus for the first forty years of his life as a wandering scholar. The process began in his native Holland, where he studied under the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer and there discovered the deep evangelical piety which marked him for life. In Holland also he made his first contact with the exact classical scholarship of Renaissance Italy, and particularly of Lorenzo Valla, the papal secretary who had exposed the false Decretals of the Church. As a scholar, Valla remained Erasmus's master all his life; it was by Valla's strict and disconcerting textual methods that Erasmus would afterwards delete, as spurious, the only reference to the Trinity in the New Testament. But Erasmus's most fruitful contact with Italy was not with the Italy of the philologists: it was with the Platonist Florence of Ficino, of Pico, and of Savonarola; and Erasmus made that contact not in Italy, where it was already extinct, but in England. There, in Oxford, English scholars —Grocyn, Linacre, Colet—returning from Italy, had grafted Florentine Platonism on to the stump of Lollard Biblicism and produced a new movement, Platonist and Pauline, by which Erasmus, coming to England in 1499, was at once inspired. From that moment, Oxford became his spiritual home. He became a disciple of Colet, the fellow-pupil of Thomas More, and for the rest of their lives remained intimately attached to both of them. After that discovery, Erasmus's intellectual experience was complete. He visited Italy, only to be disappointed by the cold, proud cult of pagan antiquity which had now replaced the Florentine renaissance. He went to Cambridge, but, as his biographer Renaudet observes, "l'esprit de Cambridge n'est pas l'esprit d'Oxford," and he was disappointed there too. Thus, from four sources, from Wyclif and Gerard Groote, from Lorenzo Valla and Savonarola, Erasmus drew together his philosophy of reform. Out of these separate elements he created a single cosmopolitan force, a combination of Latin and Northern piety capable of inspiring the army of reformers throughout Europe and conquering, from its Northern base, even orthodox France, even Jewish Spain, even pagan Rome.

And what was this philosophy? Erasmus himself called it *Philosophia Christi*, the philosophy of Christ. Rebelling against the dead intellectual apparatus of the Schoolmen and the mechanical devotions which monks and friars had multiplied among the ignorant people—the 'works' which seemed no longer to express or illustrate but to have replaced that 'faith' which St. Paul had preached—he urged men to turn to the Bible and, in particular, to the New Testament, and there to discover the primitive spirit of Christianity, as it had been before a jealous priesthood had desiccated it in formal dogma and overlaid it with 'judaic' observances.

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After all, thanks to the new art of printing, the Bible need not any longer be withheld from the Christian world; thanks to the new scholarship of Italy, the text could be cleaned of all excrescences and incrustations and presented widespread in its original form. The message of Christ, he wrote, was not either complex in itself or a mystery of state which princes, out of prudence, must conceal: it was simple, and it should be spread. "I would have women read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul; I would have the ploughman and the craftsman sing them at their work; I would have the traveller recite them to forget the weariness of his journey. Baptism and the sacraments belong to all Christians; why should knowledge of doctrine be reserved to a few men only, theologians and monks, who form but the smallest part of Christendom and often think only of their lands and goods? True theology is possessed by every man who is inspired and guided by the spirit of Christ, be he a digger or a weaver." The theologian, said Erasmus, by his expert knowledge has a duty to divulge the simplicity of the Scriptures; but it is the layman who, if he understands it, is the measure of Christianity.

This teaching was soon to become 'Protestant' teaching; but when Erasmus first advanced it 'Protestantism' had not yet been heard of. Luther had not yet spoken, nor the Church panicked. Therefore clergy and laity alike listened to it without alarm. It seemed a new and fruitful message, capable of renewing the Church from within. In all Erasmus's works this "Philosophy of Christ" is expressed. It is in his *Adages*, in his *Paraphrases*, in his *Colloquies*, in his *Praise of Folly*, in the introductions and dedications of his great scholarly editions, in the vast correspondence by which he held together, throughout Europe, the ever-growing Erasmian élite. But most simply it appears in one of his earliest works, *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, "The Manual of a Christian Soldier." When the *Enchiridion* was first published, in 1504, it attracted little notice, for Erasmus was not yet famous. But in 1508, with the publication in Venice of the great Aldine edition of his *Adages*, his fame was established, and in 1516, his wonderful year (for it saw the publication of his New Testament, his edition of St. Jerome, and his *Institutio Principis Christiani*), it swept over Europe. In that year the *Enchiridion* was rediscovered and began its conquest of Germany. Two years later a new edition, prefaced by a new manifesto of the Philosophy of Christ, was printed at Basel. Translations soon appeared in German, Dutch, and French. The great French reformers —Lefèvre d'Étaples and his friends—accepted Erasmus as their leader. And meanwhile (for in 1517 the Archduke Charles, ruler of the Netherlands, had gone with his Flemish court to be King of Spain) the works of Erasmus had crossed the Pyrenees. In 1522 began that extraordinary phenomenon, the Erasmian conquest of the Peninsula. "It is astonishing," wrote one of his disciples, "this devotion to Erasmus among all classes of Spaniards, learned and ignorant, clergy and laity alike." "They say," another reported to him, "that in reading your works they feel illuminated by the spirit of God. They say that you alone know how to publish the teaching of God for the peace and consolation of men's souls." In 1524, the *Enchiridion* was translated into Spanish. The translator himself was astonished by his success. "At the court of the Emperor," he wrote, "in the towns, in the churches, in the monasteries, even in the inns and on the roads, everyone now has the *Enchiridion* of Erasmus. Hitherto it was read only in Latin by a few scholars, who did not always understand it; now it is read in Spanish by men of all conditions, and those who had previously never heard of Erasmus now know him through this little book." From Spain the *Enchiridion* soon conquered bilingual Portugal. In 1531 an Italian translation was published at Brescia. The rest of his works soon followed. The piety of the North had triumphed throughout Europe.

THUS Erasmus conquered the élite everywhere. He conquered them because they were ready to be conquered. Particularly they were ready for him in Spain, where the reformation of Cardinal Ximenes had prepared the ground and the upper classes were deeply penetrated by a leaven of converted Jews. This connection between Erasmianism and the Jews in Spain is interesting. The fact is indubitable; it is also somewhat paradoxical, for Erasmus himself was anti-Semitic and hated Spain and Portugal, which he declined ever to visit, precisely because of their indelible Semitic tincture: "Italy," he once wrote, "contains many Jews, but Spain scarcely contains any Christians"; and he dismissed Portugal (whose 'Grocer-King'

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had been offended by Erasmus's strictures on the royal spice-monopoly) as "that Jewish race." But in fact the paradox is explicable, and explicable partly by Erasmus's own confusion of terms. To him Judaism was a religious term: it meant Talmudic formalism, pharisaical observances—in fact, precisely those 'mechanical devotions' which, in his eyes, had stifled, in official Christianity, the Philosophy of Christ. But the Spanish Jews of his time were of course converts to Christianity—the believing Jews had been expelled from the Peninsula before he had begun to publish; and being converts, newly arrived at Christianity, they had not acquired, and were not prepared to acquire, that heavy apparatus of dogma which the born Christian has more gradually learnt to wear. Ironically, it was the born Christians, the *cristianos viejos*, who, in Spain, represented the 'judaism' hated by Erasmus, and who, mobilised by the Orders and the Inquisition, ultimately destroyed Erasmianism in Spain: it was the 'new Christians,' the *conversos*, who were the natural Erasmians. Thus the Spanish Jews, by that same emancipation from dogma which afterwards made them prominent among the Spanish mystics, provided Erasmus with some of his greatest disciples and helped to make Spain, for a time, the bulwark of Erasmianism in Europe.

Such then was the position in the early 1520's. At that time the ultimate triumph of Erasmianism in the Church must have seemed almost certain. For what power had the corrupt Court of Rome against so unanimous a Europe? And this Erasmian Europe was, moreover, politically mobilised under an Erasmian sovereign. Since 1516 Erasmus had been a privy councillor of his own native sovereign, the Archduke Charles, ruler of the Netherlands, to whom he afterwards dedicated his *Education of a Christian Prince*. By 1520 the Archduke was not only King of Spain, the most powerful military monarchy of the day, but also, as Emperor in Germany, the greatest lay sovereign in Europe; and both Spain and Germany were now deeply penetrated by movements of reform. Further, the Emperor was surrounded and advised by what has been called an "Erasmian general staff." Mercurino Gattinara, his Piedmontese chancellor, was a devoted disciple of Erasmus. So was Alonso de Valdés, his indispensable Spanish secretary. Finally, in 1521 the Pope himself was a Netherlander. He was the Emperor's old tutor, Adrian of Utrecht, a compatriot, almost a friend of Erasmus, and he had taken to Rome, just as the Emperor had taken to Spain, an entourage of Netherlanders, familiar with the Christian revival of the north. To complete his triumph, all that Erasmus required was a period of peace: for it is peace, not war, he always insisted, that forwards spiritual movements among men. Unfortunately, Europe did not obtain peace. Moreover, two other forces threatened from either side the victory which Erasmus sought: two rival fanaticisms to which his whole spirit was hateful: Luther and the monks.

FROM first to last monks were the bane of Erasmus's life. Between them there was no peace. He hated and despised them as the irreconcilable enemies of learning and true piety, and they in turn pursued him with the vindictiveness of a depressed class whose very livelihood is threatened by reform. For if the spirit of monasticism was now dead—save among the Carthusians whom Erasmus himself, like More and Colet, excepted from his condemnations—its vested interests were still living, and these vested interests were threatened at their very base by Erasmus's Philosophy of Christ. Were there monks in the New Testament or in the primitive centuries of the Church? What did monks do, asked the Reformers, except perpetuate among the ignorant people those mechanical devotions, those 'works,' those pilgrimages, those relics, those indulgences which the Philosophy of Christ had never admitted? In the last two centuries, all agreed, monks had contributed nothing to religion, nothing to society, nothing to learning. They had become a mere religious vested interest, a pressure-group which, by its wealth and its influence with the illiterate people, could intimidate even the sometimes liberal court of Rome. In the early 16th century all liberal men believed that monasticism must be abolished: it was a disease in the Church. A year before that great practical reformer, Thomas Cromwell, began to abolish it in England, a committee of cardinals, appointed by the Pope, and including Cardinal Pole and the future Pope Paul IV, advocated its gradual abolition throughout Christendom. The battle-cry against the monks had been uttered thirty years before, by Erasmus, in his *Enchiridion*: *Monachatus non est pietas*, "Monkery is not piety." It

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was a phrase which the monks would remember, and revenge.

The monks, of course, had their answer. The Philosophy of Christ, they could say, was all very well for educated men: for bishops and cathedral clergy, princes and officials, cultivated merchants, lawyers, scholars—that educated bourgeoisie in which Erasmus found his disciples. But what of the poor and unlearned who could not understand such an intellectual message? For them visual images, 'mechanical devotions,' pilgrimages, relics, ceremonies, were the necessary evidence of the Church. The images which the Reformers attacked were the Bible of the illiterate. Erasmus might credit the ploughman and the craftsman with a capacity for apprehending the truth apart from such visual aids, but he was wrong: he romanticised the gross faculties of the fallen plebs. And as for the monks and friars, the religious tribunes of that plebs, the recruiting-sergeants of that Christian army, who purveyed to their crude senses this necessary trash and bric-à-brac of religion—was it not their living also? Pigs'-bones and indulgences, spiritual necessities to the ignorant people, were bread-and-butter to their tub-chaplains. . . . Unfortunately this argument, though strong as cement to rally the monks in defence of their interests, did not seem very cogent to the Princes of the Church—at least as long as those Princes were not frightened. Unfrightened, the educated classes turned naturally to Erasmus: it was only if they were frightened and needed an army that they would turn to the recruiting-sergeants, and lower their intellectual standards in deference towards them. Fortunately for the monks, a benefactor arose who did so frighten the upper classes in the Church and drove them into dependence on these hitherto despised allies. This benefactor was, appropriately enough, a renegade monk: Martin Luther.

When Luther made his frontal attack on the Roman Church, he incorporated in it, of course, many of the criticisms already made from within the Church by Erasmus. Consequently he naturally looked to Erasmus for support against Rome. But Erasmus, though a critic, was still a Churchman. He would support the Church of Rome, he replied, until he saw a better: and although he sympathised with Luther's criticism, he did not think that Luther offered a better alternative. Consequently the Roman Church also looked to Erasmus for support against Luther. From 1519 onwards both sides began to court Erasmus: each hoped that the greatest uncommitted spiritual writer in Europe would declare roundly against its adversary.

WHAT was Erasmus to do? He could not support Luther, whose philosophy he rejected and who was seeking to disrupt the Church. On the other hand he could not denounce him completely, without repudiating his own criticism of the Church—in other words, without ceasing to be Erasmus. The more he was pressed, the more he refused to commit himself, or use his unique position to endorse the rage of either party. He urged the Elector of Saxony to protect Luther against the Catholic fanatics; he urged Luther to persevere "against the tyranny of the See of Rome and its satellites, the mendicant monks"; on the other hand he disavowed the heretical views of Luther. But the proper answer to Luther, he insisted, was not condemnation, for "the accusations of Luther against the tyranny, the rapacity, the corruption of the Court of Rome" were only too true—"would to God," he wrote to the Pope's chaplain, "that they were not." The true remedy for Lutheranism was not denunciation, it was "to cut the roots from which the evil continually springs: of which one is the hatred of the Court of Rome, with its intolerable avarice and tyranny, and another certain human ordinances which weigh heavily upon Christian liberty." These "human ordinances" were of course monasticism and mechanical devotions.

To this philosophy of reform Erasmus remained constant. He sacrificed to it his comfort, his influence, his friends, his peace of mind. He has often been accused of timidity, but in fact his refusal to take sides is a sign rather of consistency: consistency to his ideal of a still united Church peacefully reformed from within. Pressed by Luther, he refused to support him or separate himself from Rome. Pressed by Rome, he refused to deny the truth or justice of Luther's criticism. "All the Princes urge me to write against Luther," he said; "I will not, or if I do, I shall so write that the Pharisees will wish I had kept silent"; and rather than be converted into an inquisitor in the Netherlands, he fled to the free city of Basel to preserve his intellectual integrity. The monks

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were delighted. From now on Erasmus, though he had opposed Luther and been spurned by Luther, could be blackened as a Lutheran. The monasteries set to work: packs of monks dived into Erasmus's writings; and soon a series of clerical tally-hos denoted the flushing, in many a deep theological thicket, of suspected heresy. In reply to the Erasmian phrase "Monkery is not piety," a monk of Cologne invented a rival battle-cry which was to become just as famous: *Erasmus posuit ova, Lutherus eduxit pullos* . . . "Erasmus laid the eggs, Luther hatched them. God grant that we may smash the eggs and stifle the chicks!"

But Erasmus's patrons were not yet prepared to abandon him to such enemies. In 1527 the Spanish monks prevailed on the Inquisitor-General to permit a general inquest on the works of Erasmus by an assembly of theologians in Valladolid. Erasmus was attacked for his doubting spirit, his inconvenient scholarship, his insinuating style. Had he not advocated toleration in religion, basing it on uncertainties which the monks in no way felt? Had he not maintained that questions of *hypostasis* and *homoousia* did not justify setting fire to the world? But it was no good. The great of the world stood by Erasmus. The Inquisitor-General himself championed him. The Emperor wrote personally to promise his support. Even the Pope would not support the monks. From the Conference of Valladolid Erasmus, thanks to his great patrons, emerged triumphant. Alas, it was his last triumph. In the very same year an event occurred which led to the loss of those patrons and precipitated the ultimate defeat of Erasmus, the ultimate victory of Luther and the monks.

FOR IN 1527 the Spanish Erasmists appealed to the sword. Erasmus hated war. Only in peace, he thought, could the spirit reform the world. It was his great grievance against the kings who patronised him that they treated war so lightly, as a royal sport. Never did Erasmus's basic republicanism express itself more eloquently than when he attacked the whole tribe of kings for their crimes against peace, their cynical profusion in dissipating the prosperity built up by the ceaseless labour of "that despised and humble crowd," the people. Rightly, he once declared, was the eagle chosen as the symbol of royalty, since it is "neither beautiful, nor musical, nor fit for food, but carnivorous, greedy, hateful to all, a curse to all, able and eager to do more harm than all." Even Popes, instead of controlling the warlike rage of kings, now joined and encouraged them in their crimes in order to establish their families in Italian duchies. Even theologians and clergy committed *la trahison des clercs*, prostituting their learning in support of secular wars. Even the Erasmians, he was now to discover, were not exempt from this disastrous fever. In 1527 the government of Charles V, fired by Erasmian visions of reform, launched its cosmopolitan armies against the incorrigible Court of Rome, and the Spanish Erasmists applauded both the war and the violent sack of Rome which it accidentally entailed. Meanwhile the Erasmian chancellor Gattinara applied to Erasmus to re-edit, as an imperial manifesto against the Papacy, Dante's *De Monarchia*. Once again Erasmus refused: he declined to be the agent of the messianic Erasmianism of Spain.

He was wise in his refusal. The sack of Rome was, for him, a fatal turning-point. Shocked by his own action, the Emperor himself lost his nerve: he moved gradually over to the papal side. And the Pope, shocked by his own failure, decided—if only the Emperor would secure his family in the duchy of Florence—to become an imperialist. On these terms the bargain was sealed. The Medici returned to Florence, the Pope decided to live and die an imperialist, and the Emperor decided not, after all, to clean up the Papacy. Thus the Emperor abandoned the Erasmians, and soon afterwards they suffered still further blows. In 1530 Gattinara died, in 1532 Valdés. Five years after the sack of Rome the 'Erasmian general staff' was dissolved. Against Luther and the monks the Erasmians were left to rely on themselves. At once they began to feel the increasing pressure of persecution. Already the books of Erasmus had been censured in Paris; soon his French translator was burnt at the stake. In Spain too some of his disciples were burnt and even the Inquisitor-General could not save them. From now on the pace quickened. Rome, said its nuncio with satisfaction, was only waiting for Erasmus to die in order then to declare him formally a heretic.

Erasmus died in 1536 in Basel, already by then a Protestant city. He died uncondemned —indeed it was in his last year that he was offered, by a new 'Erasmist' pope, the cardinal's

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hat: but this honour he refused, as he had always refused other than purely intellectual authority. Nevertheless, he died defeated and defeatist. His hope, which had once seemed so near to fulfilment, of seeing the Philosophy of Christ accepted throughout Europe, was broken. Already, on the first emergence of Luther, he had foreseen the future: the recrudescence of monkery, the defeat of the Philosophy of Christ, the victory, within the Roman Church, of the Council of Trent. "A fine defender of evangelic liberty is Luther," he had then written. "By his fault the yoke which we bear shall become twice as heavy. Mere permissible opinions shall become articles of faith. It will become dangerous to teach the Gospel . . . Luther behaves like a wild man; his adversaries goad him on. But if they prevail, we shall be left to write only the epitaph of Christ, dead without hope of resurrection." Erasmus was a true prophet. After his death all this came about. Nevertheless, a whole generation passed before his ideals were formally defeated; and the fate of this generation is interesting, for it bears some resemblance to our own. It was the generation of the liberals who were obliged to choose between rival orthodoxies.

THE period from about 1530, when Erasmus lost his protectors, until 1559, when his teaching was most emphatically condemned by Rome, was the generation of the Erasmian *epigoni*, the men who had grown up under his influence and who were now feeling the ever-increasing pressure, on either side, of Lutheranism and the Monks. What were they to do in such a crisis? Liberal men, believers in the Philosophy of Christ, they wished to remain true to that ideal, but they could no longer hope to realise it within an undivided Church: they must make the difficult choice between opposing bigotries. Some, in hope, chose Catholicism: but it was a 'Protestant' Catholicism, the Catholicism of Erasmus himself and, after his death, of the 'reforming' cardinals, Contarini, Sadoleto, Morone, Pole. They believed in such 'Protestant' doctrines as Justification by Faith, the renovation of the soul by Grace, and in the cult of mental prayer. They looked back through Erasmus to Savonarola and *The Imitation of Christ*, and their favourite contemporary book was a little work which a Benedictine disciple of the Spanish Erasmian Juan de Valdés, had composed in a monastery on Mount Etna, *The Benefit of Christ*. Others, in despair, chose Protestantism, but it was a 'Catholic' Protestantism, the Protestantism of the German Melanchthon, the Alsatian Bucer, the Spaniard Encinas, still hoping for reunion across the narrowing Erasmian bridge. But ultimately such attempts proved futile: the gulf widened, the bridge crumbled, and the Erasmians who sought to meet upon it had to scramble to opposite sides or perish in the intervening abyss. The middle position became impossible.

Thus, little by little, in the generation after Erasmus's death, the Erasmian élite was dissolved. Death, desertion, or martyrdom carried away its members and they were not replaced. But before each desertion, or each martyrdom, what a crisis of conscience occurred! Wherever we look, it is the same: groups of friends broken up by the agony of divergent choice and retrospective recrimination. Of the liberal cardinals who in 1534 had proposed the abolition of monasticism, one—Caraffa—became a reactionary, persecuting Pope and threw another of them, Morone, into prison as a heretic; a third, Pole, died in disgrace, accused of heresy. The little book of devotion which they had read together, *The Benefit of Christ*, was so thoroughly dealt with by the Inquisition that 300 years afterwards no copy of it could be found. It had become a Protestant work, like its precursors, *The Imitation of Christ* and the devotional writings of Savonarola.

Everywhere it was the same story. But perhaps the most famous of these Erasmian separations was that which divided not the living but the dead: the separation of Erasmus himself from his closest friend, Sir Thomas More. In all their lives, More and Erasmus had never diverged. Florentine Oxford had been the inspiration of both. Both had admired Pico della Mirandola and translated Lucian (afterwards a suspect author). Both had rejected monasticism, but exempted the Carthusians from that rejection. They had influenced each other's work, shared each other's irony, believed alike in toleration and republican city-government. And yet these inseparable allies were separated after death by rigid divisions of belief which they had never admitted. In the foundering of the Erasmian 'Third Church,' More was converted into a saint of post-Tridentine Rome; Erasmus was utterly disowned by the same Rome, discarded—and accepted—as a Protestant. Already

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in the Protestant England of Edward VI his *Paraphrases* were printed for use in churches; by 1559 all his books were on the Roman Index; thereafter, while the Inquisition was obliterating even his name from Catholic Europe, his works, which had once been universal, were printed only in Protestant cities. The imprints of Paris, Augsburg, Mainz, Alcalá, Seville, Zaragoza, Venice, Modena gradually disappear from their title-pages, to be replaced by Basel, Geneva, Amsterdam, Leyden, Hanover, Heidelberg, Leipzig, Oxford, Stockholm, Aberdeen.

Thus by 1560 the division seemed complete. The Reformers were outside the Church; and within the Church the Counter-Reformation, as it was formulated by the last session of the Council of Trent, was a victory for the monks. Every specifically Erasmian position was emphatically rejected by Rome and declared a mark of Protestant heresy. Thereafter the remaining Erasmists in the Church, however distinguished, were summarily dealt with. Even an Archbishop of Toledo, Primate of all Spain, was persecuted by the Inquisition and thrown into prison to die because of his Erasmian views. To avoid such a fate, the European Erasmists went over to the Protestantism of which they were accused, the Spanish Erasmists took refuge in mysticism—only to find that mysticism was persecuted also as an 'Erasmian' deviation. And on the other side, all that Erasmus had attacked in the Roman Church was now strengthened, reasserted, multiplied. Instead of appeasing the Reformers, Rome had decided to defy them. New monastic orders, new relics, new images, new devotions—this was now the order of the day, and art was called in to advertise ever more ostentatiously this reinvigorated apparatus of belief. Of the old concessions to reason, nothing was left. Even the achievements of Erasmian Biblical Criticism were rejected, by both sides: the Book of Revelations crept back into the canon of the New Testament, the Epistle to the Hebrews was restored to St. Paul, the spurious *comma iohanneum* returned, for two centuries, into the New Testament. Erasmianism, it seemed, was killed stone-dead.

IT WOULD be easy to end here, as has often been done; but it would, I think, be unfair. Political programmes may be defeated entirely, but not ideas: at least, not great ideas. Political circumstances may alter around them, ideological frontiers may be formed against or across them, but such convulsions merely alter the terrain: they may divert or divide, but they do not permanently dam the stream. The idea of ideological blocs systematically opposed to one another in intellectual matters is a naïve idea such as can only occur to doctrinaires and bigots. The Age of the Reformation had of course its bigots: monks who, in 16th century Spain, denounced Liberal Catholics as 'Lutheran' heretics, puritans who, in 17th century England, denounced Liberal Protestants as 'popish' conspirators. But the historian of ideas is not interested in these stunted McCarthyites. The victims of persecution are always more interesting than their persecutors; and if we wish to discover the heirs of Erasmus, rather than to assume too easily that they were crushed by the Counter-Reformation, we should not accept as final and mutually exclusive the barren categories of 'Protestant' and 'Catholic' into which Christendom was officially and superficially divided. There was an Erasmianism after Erasmus, a secret stream which meandered to and fro across those loudly proclaimed but ill-guarded frontiers, creating oases of rational thought impartially on either side.

In Protestantism this stream is, of course, more easily identified, for the Protestant Churches openly adopted Erasmus and used his name. In some ways his direct heir was Calvin. Calvinism, at least in its early days, had a double appeal: it appealed to the laity in general, the simple gentry revolting against the privileges and usurpations of the priesthood, and it "exercised its most profound attraction not on this or that economic class but on the intellectual élite of all classes."* Now these were precisely the two social groups to whom Erasmus also had appealed. The ideal of

* I take this phrase from a most interesting passage in J. H. Hexter's book, *More's Utopia, the Biography of an Idea* (Princeton, 1952), p. 93. The intellectual ascendancy of Calvinism *in the early period* of the Counter-Reformation deserves further study. In my opinion a great deal of historical error has been caused by failure to distinguish the successive phases of religion, e.g. between the intellectual Calvinism of Calvin's own time (contrasting with the intellectual poverty of Rome), and the backward Calvinism of the early 17th century, which appealed to different classes and contrasted with the intellectual revival of Rome.

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Erasmus had been the ideal of lay piety, simple, sincere, animated by faith, nourished by prayer, free from the ostentatious trappings of priestly 'works'; and his scholarly rationalism had drawn to him too "the intellectual élite of all classes." When Rome had yielded to the monks, the intellectual élite moved over to Protestantism: from Italy, Spain, and Marian England there was an exodus of Erasmists to Geneva and Basel; and Calvin, for those harder times, cast the ideas of Erasmus into his harder mould. It is easy, if we are blinded by the later, less intellectual form of Calvinism, to overlook its earlier character; but if we look more closely, it is clear. Calvin was brought up under the influence of Erasmus and himself professed the "Philosophy of Christ"; the inspiration of Erasmus is clear in his works; and it was in Basel, the capital of Erasmianism, that Calvin, in the last year of Erasmus's life, wrote and published his *Institutes*. Admittedly Calvinism had also many features which Erasmus would have condemned, and in theocratic Geneva was dogmatic and intolerant; but as practised under more tolerant lay rulers in England and the Netherlands, it could become, in many ways, the continuation of Erasmianism. Unfortunately, Calvinism, becoming intolerant, was unable to retain for long the intellectual Erasmian élite. Falling back therefore on its other basis, the poorer gentry, it degenerated into a religion of backwoods squires: the Huguenot *hobereaux* of Southern France, the Covenanting lairds of Scotland, the Orangist *petite noblesse* of Gelderland. With this change, the spirit of Erasmus left Calvinism and sought, within Protestantism, another body.

It found it in the 'rational theology' of the 17th century, a theology which was 'unitarian' in origin and began with Erasmus. Erasmus, on purely scholarly grounds, had correctly rejected from his New Testament the Trinitarian interpolation in the Epistle of John. Under pressure from the orthodox, he had in the end wearily restored it, but he had made it clear—to the fury of the monks—that he only did so for the sake of peace. Erasmus was therefore regarded as a unitarian, the founder of a rationalist unitarian school. The other founders were the French and Italian rationalists, Castellio, Acontius, and the two Sozzini who, fleeing from the Inquisition to the Erasmian city of Basel, there formulated their views and published the first systematic defence of toleration, *De Haereticis an sint Persequendi*. Afterwards the younger Sozzini went on and preached these views, under the name of Socinianism, in the italianised kingdom of Poland. Thus fathered, Socinianism incorporated not only anti-trinitarian conclusions but also Erasmian tolerance, Erasmian rationalism, and Erasmian respect for the Bible as the purest source of Christianity. In the late 16th century, England and Poland were the two most tolerant countries in Europe, and it was no accident that they proved the most accommodating homes for the unorthodox spirit of Erasmus. But by the next century the Jesuit reconquest of Poland was complete; the Socinian univeristy of Rakow, 'the Sarmatian Athens,' was snuffed out, and the Erasmian professors fled to a new area of tolerance which had been reconquered from the Counter-Reformation: the United Provinces of Erasmus's own home, the Netherlands. There already Calvinism had begun to harden into a rigid, illiberal system. The fresh breath from Erasmian Poland suddenly regenerated it, creating in its midst the liberal, tolerant 'Arminianism' of Amsterdam; and from Amsterdam the same refreshing air was carried back to increasingly puritan England and there recreated the religious liberalism which Erasmus himself had found 130 years before.

What an extraordinary revenge it was! In 1500 Erasmus had helped to create in Oxford that Florentine, Platonist piety which challenged the rigid Catholicism of the Middle Ages. Now, in 1630, his spirit, having fled first to Poland, then to Holland, had returned to Oxford to challenge the rigid Calvinism which had at one time seemed his more direct inheritor. Throughout the 1630's 'Socinian' books poured into England from Amsterdam. Their ideas penetrated both parties in the Church alike, showing themselves both in Independency to the Left and in Laudianism to the right of strict Calvinism. It was in high-church Arminianism that they first made themselves noticed. Lucius Cary, Viscount Falkland, and 'the incomparable John Hales of Eton' were each described as 'the first Socinian in England'; John Chillingworth and Jeremy Taylor were also, for their tolerance, called Socinians; and Archbishop Laud himself, for all his illiberal politics, was regarded as too liberal towards such ideas. The great patron of

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this 'Socinian' reception, Lord Falkland, who built up a fine Socinian library and made his house at Great Tew into the centre of such studies, was a particular admirer of Erasmus; and it is from the famous *convivium theologicum* of Great Tew, the headquarters of the new Oxford movement, and from the Cambridge Platonism of the next generation, that rationalist Christianity ultimately spread over England.

MEANWHILE, what of the Catholic Church? Ostensibly, of course, Erasmus had no place in it. His name and works were carefully blotted out of its official records. But if Sir Thomas More could ultimately* find a place in Rome of the Counter-Reformation, could Erasmus really be excluded? Silently, secretly, anonymously, he returned. He returned by two roads: first with the Jesuits; afterwards, when they had degenerated from his exact spirit, with the great mystical revival of 17th century France.

For although the Counter-Reformation was, ostensibly at least, a victory for the monks, it was not *only* a victory for the monks. That indeed would have been impossible. The Holy Office might condemn all Erasmian doctrines; it might repudiate the Erasmian cult of prayer, the Erasmian teaching of grace and faith; it might burn the books of Erasmus in Rome; it might forbid the translation of the Bible in whole or in part; it might reject rational criticism; and instead of all these it might offer again, redoubled, the old apparatus of religion on whose dead weight Erasmus had poured his irony, the other reformers their scorn. But if it had done no more than this, how could Rome have reconquered, as it did, a third of the provinces lost to Reform? In fact the Counter-Reformation was more positive than this. It rejected Erasmus indeed, but in name only. It stole his spirit and used it not to purge away but to reanimate the lifeless cumber of monastic religion. The first to do this, the real architects of the Counter-Reformation, were the newest order, the Jesuits. It was they who showed that both the new learning and the new piety of Erasmus could be used to revigorate the old forms of religion. The *Philosophia Christi* of Erasmus could become the Spiritual Exercises of Loyola; his fluent Latinity could be continued in their polished schools; his Biblical criticism could become ultimately the astringent scholarship of the Bollandists. Thus refreshed, the spirit of Christianity could carry still that deposit of previous centuries whose dead weight Erasmus had sought to lessen: perhaps it could even be enriched by it.

The Jesuits, of course, had to walk warily, especially in Spain and at Rome where the power of the old orders was greatest. They had to denounce one half of Erasmianism before they could safely appropriate and exploit the other. Thus Loyola himself had read Erasmus's *Enchiridion*, and he based his *Spiritual Exercises* fundamentally upon it; but he was careful to ensure that his pupils read it only in an expurgated and anonymous version, and he added to the *Spiritual Exercises* the rigorous and corrective *Rules for Thinking with the Church*. And of course the Jesuits, like the Calvinists, rejected altogether the Erasmian belief in toleration. Even so they often found themselves in trouble on account of their 'Erasmian' innovations. They were distrusted by Pope Paul IV whose total condemnation of Erasmus they deplored. Their 'Erasmian' cult of 'mental prayer' was attacked as heretical by Dominicans and Pope alike. They supported, against the Pope, Cardinal Morone, who was accused of heresy for disseminating the Erasmian book *The Benefit of Christ*; their support, against the Inquisition, of the Erasmian Archbishop Carranza nearly compromised their order and they had to wriggle out of their commitments; and they were constantly suspected of 'illuminism'—that heresy of direct contact with God, without the expensive and oppressive help of the Church, for which the Spanish Erasmists were persecuted by the Inquisition. Nevertheless, by opportune denials, tactical tergiversations, and firm discipline over their indiscreet members, the Jesuits survived these difficulties: they made room for some at least of the ideas of Erasmus in the monk-ridden Church of Rome; and thereby, in half Europe, they saved it. It is not surprising that the writers of Counter-Reformation Europe in whom the spirit of Erasmus has been most observed were often the pupils, sometimes the admiring pupils, of the Jesuits.

The intellectual supremacy of Jesuits in the

* Rome's slowness to admit More among the elect is interesting and perhaps significant. The English Catholics confidently expected his early canonisation, but in fact he was not beatified till 1886, nor canonised till 1935.

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Catholic Church, like that of the Calvinists among the Protestants, was brief. In the 17th century it soon declined into mere intellectual smartness. But just as the desiccated Calvinist orthodoxy of the 17th century was refreshed by the 'Socinian' spirit from Poland, so the courtly vapidity and moral 'laxism' of the 17th century Jesuits was challenged—at least in Northern Europe—by a new liberalism: the great mystical revival which triumphed in France. Once again, since it was a Catholic movement, the name of Erasmus was suppressed: Erasmus was still, in the eyes of orthodox French Catholics "*malheureusement catholique s'il est encore digne de ce nom*" (André du Val) and only a bold writer, like Claude Joly, could openly name him as the source of his inspiration. But the ideas of the new mysticism were his: they were, in the words of one of its historians, "*idées érasmiennes débaptisées*"; and they came into France not from Italy, dominated by the now disreputable Jesuits, nor from Spain, reconquered by brute monkish reaction, but from the Catholic Rhineland and, above all, from the Catholic South of Erasmus's home, the Netherlands. Just as the Protestant Netherlands received back the 'Socinian' spirit of Erasmus and therewith refreshed the wooden Calvinism of Holland and England, so the Catholic Netherlands, recreating the mystical spirit of Erasmus, discharged it upon France to refresh the wooden orthodoxy of the Sorbonne. The result was what the abbé Brémond called "the mystical invasion" of France: an invasion which, like the 'Socinian' invasion of England, flowed alike in all parties in the Church, bearing fruit in the *dévots* and the Jansenists, in Bérulle and Pascal, in St. Francis of Sales and St. Vincent de Paul—the great figures who gave to Catholicism in 17th century France a warmth, a richness, and a humanity which it could claim nowhere else. At the beginning of the new century the fact could be admitted. In his "Apology or Justification for Erasmus," a French Catholic, in 1713, paid at last open tribute to "that great man" whose work, so long resisted, had at last been achieved. The age of rational, tolerant piety had begun.

That age now seems to be closing. Therefore it may be useful to consider Erasmus, who was, in a sense, both its prophet and its martyr. What does a humanist do when bigotries swell, black and red, on either side? There are some today who say that intellectuals should line up on either side as a species of army chaplains to encourage the troops. But I do not think that Erasmus, if he had yielded to political pressure and joined the Gadarene stampede of Lutherans or monks would have had so lasting and beneficent an effect in the history of thought as he did by continuing to advocate peace for the diffusion of unarmed sense. Intellectuals may be citizens; they may even, as such, have to become soldiers; but it is not their business to be recruiting-sergeants. If their rational message is not heard in their time, let them still utter it rather than turn it into a battle-cry: it may still be heard tomorrow. For history, closely considered, suggests that opposite sides in an ideological struggle, for all their high-sounding abstract slogans, are not so opposite as they think that they are. The humanist message in fact can be understood by both. It may take a long time and a devious route; it may have to survive by stealth; but there is no proper alternative to it. Whether we think of secular or religious ideologies, the words of a sensible 18th century Whig bishop remain true: "the Church, like the Ark of Noah, is worth saving: not for the sake of the unclean beasts that almost filled it, and probably made most noise and clamour in it, but for the little corner of rationality that was as much distressed by the stink within as by the tempest without." In the ideological struggles before the Age of Reason, that "little corner of rationality" was occupied by Erasmus; and therefore it is he, not Luther or Calvin, the Pope or the Jesuits, who still speaks to us with a human voice.

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Letter from RANGOON

What Kind of Freedom?

THERE is much concern these days with preserving the freedom of those parts of Asia that have not yet fallen to the Communists, but little thought is given to "what kind of freedom" the non-Communist Asians want. They certainly want freedom from want, and freedom from being involved in other peoples' quarrels. They want these two freedoms so much that in seeking them they sacrifice other freedoms—individual freedom, freedom of expression and criticism. Strong evidence that this is so brought together in Rangoon last February a group of authors, writers, politicians, journalists, and professors who met as Asia's first Conference for Cultural Freedom. They met under the joint auspices of Burma's "Society for the Extension of Democratic Ideals" and the Congress for Cultural Freedom, at a time when the country was enthusiastically acclaiming a Chinese Communist "Cultural Mission" which drew unprecedented crowds to its song-and-dance performances. Almost symbolically, the conference had to wait for hotel room until the dancers left. The Burmese government, conscious of Chinese power, was doing its best by the conference, in a left-handed way. No member of the government sponsored the conference, only wives of ministers did.* But even semi-official sponsorship had its problems. The Chinese Ambassador protested because a member of the host committee named Communism as a threat to freedom in a press interview. And the *New Times of Burma*, which is not a Communist paper, admonished against starting a cultural cold war and called for "cultural coexistence."

This newspaper was conforming with the neutralist fashion and the delegates to the Conference for Cultural Freedom were not. They were exceptions because they were concerned with things which cause very little stir in free Asia. For instance, they were concerned with India's Press Commission Report, which advocates nationalising the country's principal news agency and a state monopoly of newsprint. Other instances: the tendency for Asian Governments to monopolise the printing of text-books, thus taking away a major source of income from independent printers and endangering their existence; educational restrictions on the Chinese minority in Thailand; discrimination against Hindus in Pakistan; agitation against Christian missionaries in India; the press laws of Indonesia; political organisation in Burma's schools by the government party; the persecution of the Ahmadiya sect in Pakistan.

The delegates to the Rangoon conference deplored the tendency of governments to legislate on matters best left to individual conscience. Some governments in Asia take such measures to bolster up a dictatorial régime. Others are democratic and have high motives of public morality in curbing, say, the freedom of the press; but by doing so, they provide would-be dictators with a ready-made arsenal of coercive legislation. The astounding thing, as A. K. Brohi—a Pakistan delegate—said, is that so few people seem to be aware of what is happening. The Conference on Cultural Freedom at Rangoon is therefore important because those few Asians who *are* aware gathered to

* Not that there was any lack of distinguished sponsors. Among them were: Lin Yutang; Kotaro Kanaka, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Japan; Shigero Nanbara, President Emeritus of Tokyo University; U Thein Maung, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Burma; Sumitro Djojohadikusuno, Dean of the Faculty of Economics of the University of Indonesia; Conrado Benitez, Dean of the Filippino Women's University; Sir Arthur Wijeyewardhene, former Governor General of Ceylon; and Dr. Sampurranand, Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh.

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issue a collective warning and to analyse the reasons for this disregard of individual and cultural freedom.

THE main reason, as the conference saw it, was Asia's understandable obsession with its poverty and backwardness. To feed their people, and to acquire the power which would give them equal status with the advanced West, the nations of Asia are concentrating all their efforts on economic and social improvements. But these nations are handicapped by the pluralism of their societies, by rigid class divisions leading to social immobility, by the frequent lack of political unity, by a vacuum in leadership—especially at the executive and technical levels—following the departure of colonial administrators. Moreover, with the exception of Japan, these countries do not have a big class of private entrepreneurs, they have scarcely any private capital formation, and very poor internal markets. Clearly the conditions for the development of private enterprise are lacking. The state has to step in, set up industries, provide them with protected markets, find the foreign exchange and the internal finance. There is the time element, also. For political reasons, progress has to be quick. Inescapably, more and more has to be done by the government. And people have come to expect, through propaganda, that the government will do things for them—on a massive scale.

Thus, ever increasing economic power is put in the hands of the bureaucracy which might well become much stronger than the Western-style political institutions designed to control it. Very few people in Asia seem shocked at the prospect. Consequently, few people are really shocked at the prospect of Communism. To many of them, such as the Indian untouchables, the minorities, the unemployed, Communism promises the equality of status they want. They are handicapped in detecting the dangers of this creed by the neutralist attitude of their governments. These governments hope that China, preoccupied with her own economic progress, will leave them alone if they appear friendly; so they make statements friendly to Peking. The common people believe their leaders, and often go on from there to believe the Chinese propaganda which preaches that only Communism provides a quick way out of Asian poverty. Asia seems to be faced with either being converted to totalitarianism by the Communists, or evolving some equally illiberal "ism" of its own.

The Asian Conference for Cultural Freedom, having diagnosed the causes of this disease, passed to antidotes. They recognised that planning could not be abandoned, since economic necessities demanded it. To counter its dangers, one delegate said planning would be all right if everybody planned for the good of the people. That did not seem to impress the conference. Another said that nationalism would prove a bulwark for freedom, and many rose to point out that nationalism produced chauvinism, trade jingoism, oppression of cultural minorities, and was clearly no obstacle to Communism—certainly the desire to imitate China and "put the West in its place" helps make Communism and nationalism compatible.

RELIGION was then advanced as a check for the illiberal current in Asian thought. The advocates of religion gave historical evidence that Asian creeds in their "pure undistorted forms" encouraged social activity and "this-worldliness" instead of "other-worldliness," and thus favoured freedom. But there are still the impure, distorted forms. Even those, however, it was claimed, unlike Communism, catered for man's craving for the spiritual as well as the material. There, of course, the apologists of religion went wrong, as some other delegates pointed out. For a man with a tendency to faith, what often matters is not the object of faith, but the act of faith itself. Communism demands this act of faith as much as any religion. It provides opportunities for a life of practically selfless devotion. It even has its mystical aspects. It does claim superiority over Asian religions because it preaches altruistic concentration on the salvation of the society (in this world) rather than on the salvation of the individual (in the next world). This is an important factor. The fight for independence conditioned people to strive as a group for an objective in this life. Communism profits by this conditioning.

Religion, on the whole, did not appear to be the cure. So, instead of religion, Jayaprakash Narayan, the Indian socialist leader, preached a utopian humanist doctrine with attractive shades of anarchy:

"We think of people as groups or classes—as

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capitalists, workers, Russians, Americans, Asians. We have stopped thinking of the individual man." We try to create, in the countries of Asia, industrialised centralised societies which, although they produce wealth, also destroy the individual creative instinct, turn men into a cipher and therefore take away their freedom. Everything is regulated and enforced; but when done under compulsion a good action ceases being a good action. The welfare state is wrong because it assumes that human beings cannot rely on themselves. Let us have, said Jayaprakash, a decentralised society, where democracy will flourish as it can only in small units, with the means of production spread in every cottage, and only enough heavy industries to produce these means of production.

When challenged, however, Jayaprakash could not deny that his system would require more capital than a planned centralised economy and that it might not produce the rapid material advancement Asian man seems to want. ("He *does* want the culture of the cinema" a delegate said.) Nor was he able to say how his system would overcome the handicap of being split into two different societies, nor who would decide which people would live in the bucolic and which in the industrial worlds of his vision.

THE discussions around these topics showed that the delegates from the various countries often meant different things when using the same words, and that they did not have a common frame of reference, a background of common experience, or even a common sense of history. They had in common (with the exception of the Thais and to a lesser degree the Filipinos) grievances against the white man, but that did not help in establishing a meeting of minds on the philosophical plane.

Eventually the delegates had to agree that their nations would not do without planning, that they would pursue material power, freedom from want, and freedom from "being second-class countries" as their primary objectives. These objectives, they went on to say, need not be incompatible with individual and cultural freedom.

There are, of course, threats to freedom inherent in the systems forced upon Asia by her present conditions and by the objectives adopted by the people. These systems, such as state planning, seem almost unavoidable: but the destruction of freedom by them is avoidable if there is awareness of the danger, vigilance in resisting excesses, and persistence in pointing out what is being sacrificed in the long run for the sake of short-term advantages. In a continent so backward, this watchdog role is bound to devolve upon the intellectual, who alone is equipped mentally for detecting threats to freedom in otherwise desirable and popular measures such as social reform and "avoiding trouble with strong neighbours." And his first task will be to defend his own freedom of thought, of expression—to defend cultural freedom, in fact.

The most interesting part of the Rangoon conference was the light it shed on how suitable the Asian intellectual is for the part of freedom's champion. The men at the conference were, perhaps, the most suitable, being the most aware of the dangers which they were discussing. They knew, moreover, that together with the other intellectuals of Asia they were the guardians of liberty. Yet, they wondered about their fitness for the job. Their speeches were much less revealing than the papers they submitted—it is less embarrassing to analyse one's self in writing than to get up and make a public confession.

Many of them went into this self-analysis chiefly for the purpose of justifying shortcomings they knew existed. In this process, they wrote long hair-splitting arguments on what, for instance, might have been if Asia had not been colonised—had not felt the impact of the West. These discussions only served to highlight the deep scars left by the white man. But other delegates drew a more complete picture of the Asian intellectual.

This picture shows him coming, overnight, after independence, face-to-face with reality, his capacity for "facing the world on level terms impaired by his experience of alien rule." He appears almost frightened of his new freedom. He is ill-prepared for his new responsibilities. His education was not of the right kind. It was Western, inspired by a philosophy totally different from the philosophy which inspires the world in which he lives. The philosophy of his education aimed at mastery over nature. But the life of the millions around him was directed towards harmony and identification with nature. The language, the concepts he used at school, differed from those of his home.

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He became an intellectual half-breed, rejected by the world of one parent and unable or unwilling to identify himself with the world of the other. His faith in his country's traditions shaken, he seeks after things like "humanism" and is appalled to find how badly this is practised by its teachers.

Coming from a society where everyone "belongs," he finds himself intolerably isolated. Doubly so, because between his "enlightenment" and the surrounding illiteracy or obscurantism there is no bridge. Nor is he even at home in his enlightenment. He often dissipates much of his time proving to himself that his own civilisation (whose products he rejects) is superior to the Western one he has adopted.

This confusion—a spiritual void, really—is inevitable. These men were subjected to humiliation by another race. Their system collapsed under Western attack. Therefore, they are seeking a new "world outlook." I saw the same process in Korea, where defeated and humiliated Western P.O.W.s came to look for a new set of values, rejecting their own which, so they believed, had led them to their abject state—it is a sobering thought that the P.O.W.s were most susceptible to indoctrination when in this mental condition.

THERE is another major factor in the mental make-up of the Asian intellectual: frustration. The present generation grew up with glorious dreams of an Asian resurgence. But reality has put huge obstacles along the way to the dream—poverty, unemployment, weakness. The solutions are terribly slow, and the intellectual, frustrated in his dreams, is impatient.

This is why he often turns to Communism. As one of the papers submitted to the conference by G. D. Parikh put it: "Given the cultural background of Asia, Communism does not produce the sense of horror it does elsewhere; on the other hand, it seems to hold out promises meeting the two basic needs of Asians —the economic and the spiritual. It holds the promise of rapid economic development which will produce a paradise. And it will mean the preservation of the Asian's self-respect by according him the status of equality. . . . The Soviet Union makes the former look plausible; and China reinforces the latter. . . . China, after all, did stand up to the West in Korea."

The threat of Communism is to intangible things which do not exist yet in Asia; while its contribution in organisation seems like a real cure for deficiencies which do exist. Communism offers to its devotees a single-minded vocation which could fill their spiritual void and give them a sense of belonging. Besides, with its emphasis on modernisation and planning, it practically guarantees to the intellectual the importance he craves.

Then, because fear is an unpleasant sensation, there is a profound and almost pathetic desire to tell oneself that there is nothing to fear. It is out of this escapist desire that many intellectuals of the area shut their eyes to the dangers Communism holds for cultural freedom and speak of "coexistence between the cultures of Democracy and Communism." The next step is to drink deeply at the well of Communist culture and imperceptibly to adopt its methods of thought. Peking makes this easy by financing publications, cultural missions, and travel which offer to the Asian intellectual an outlet that would otherwise be denied to him by the poverty of his condition. The results are gratifying for the Communists—for instance, they gained control of the Rangoon University student body at its last election.

All this does not make the Asian intellectual a good guardian of freedom, one who will see that the necessary economic planning and military neutrality do not lead his country to Communism or some other equally illiberal "ism." Meanwhile, schools—being built much faster than factories—turn out more and more intellectuals of this type.

This does not necessarily mean that the cause of freedom in Asia is lost. After all, in India and Burma, for instance, there are achievements to show for the democratic way, achievements in which the intellectual has a role to play. Eventually, all over Asia, he will become less isolated. Through tackling actual problems requiring scientific thought, he might go beyond a mere knack for such thought and appreciate its principles. His desire to find something in his traditions which can equal the efficiency of the West might be satisfied. In Burma, Buddhism is showing the way. The spiritual void and the frustration might become less, and the intellectual, with growing self-respect, will come to value his individuality more, will come to cherish individual and cultural freedom which he will then be able to defend.

Philip Deane

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Communications

Hume as Historian

SIR—In her article on David Hume in the March ENCOUNTER, Mrs. Marjorie Grene tried to explain Hume's political opinions, particularly about Stuart history, as the manifestation of his gentle disposition. However, to place the emphasis on Hume's character while ignoring the intellectual framework of his political ideas is unfair and unflattering to a great thinker. Furthermore, to pretend that Hume's praise of "1688" was only a well-mannered concession to contemporary opinion involves complete neglect of Hume's very individual and independent discussion of the Revolution.

The purpose of government, Hume believed, was to preserve the security of society. As wild constitutional innovations tended to disrupt authority and hence social cohesion, Hume favoured only those political changes which stemmed from existing practice and which slowly modified the political structure. So, although he approved of the balancing of parliament and king in the post-Revolutionary limited monarchy of Great Britain, he could not condone the precipitate conduct of the radical parliamentarians under Charles I in pursuit of political liberty. In the essay, "Of the Original Contract," Hume wrote that "if the measures of allegiance were to be taken" from the reign of Charles I, "a total anarchy must have place in human society, and a final period at once be put to every government." Hume urged that resistance to established government was justified only in exceptional circumstances, when authority wantonly outstepped the boundaries of precedent. James II did this and the Revolution was justified, in spite of the dangers inherent in the change from one royal family to another.

Hume did not, like so many of his contemporaries, convert history into political propaganda. In his *History of England* he weighs carefully the responsibility of both sides for the political violence of the 17th century and in his political essays he presents all points of view before justifying the Revolution of 1688. Against the fashionable Whig interpretation of history, held by men like Horace Walpole, which permitted no mitigation of the Stuarts' culpability, Hume offered a less frenzied and more detailed account, which sometimes showed sympathy with the Stuarts' predicament. Hume gloried in the benefits of political liberty in the 18th century without defying its protagonists in the 17th century; he welcomed the Revolution but urged the devotees of Locke to remember that resistance was an occasional expedient to preserve liberty, but authority was a permanent necessity to safeguard society.

JOHN DAY

Christ's College, Cambridge

Sense and Nonsense: a Footnote

SIR—The alarums of Mr. Philip Toynbee's assault on Logical Positivism in your November issue must ring as hearteningly in the ears of many a writer and poet (condemned decades ago, by *lettres de cachet* bearing Professor Ayer's dread signature, to rot in linguistic dungeons) as the crash of the battering-rams, the huzzas, the clank of dissolving fetters and the musketry of liberation. Rearing his ladders against the dark towers of Schloss Wittgenstein, Mr. Toynbee has stormed a keep as adamantine as the Bastille.

During the escalade, he pointed with his cutlass at a counterscarp which seems to me the weakest point of Professor Ayer's hitherto impregnable fortress. By "weakest point" I actually mean that aspect of Logical Positivism which I find hardest to assimilate. Mr. Toynbee demonstrates that Logical Positivism makes "nonsense" of the Sonnets, and also mentions that poets have an official Logical Positivist dispensation. But it is not only the language of metaphysics and poetry that are hard to unload of their associated images; even the simplest words are radioactive with *mana*. They stand at the apex of invisible phalanxes of phantoms, and every attempt to exorcise these ghosts, reduce the words they haunt to the isolation of mathematical symbols, creates a confusion far greater than before. For instance, should Professor Ayer enounce (as well he might) the first clause of a "statement" in the following words: "The cat is on the mat," one would be prone to lose track of the remainder by wondering: what cat, and what mat? It is plain that he means a basic cat on a basic mat; but, for some reason a tabby on a patchwork rug immediately appears. To avoid this, let

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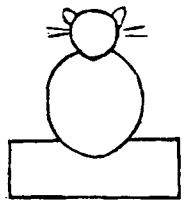
a = cat, and b = mat; in fact $\frac{a}{b}$. But the cat is not divided by the mat, $\frac{b}{a}$ merely suggests claustrophobia, squaring and cubing are no help (and, in *a*'s case, impossible), so, abandoning algebra for geometry, both cat and mat are reduced as nearly as possible to geometrical terms: a small circle with two acute angled isosceles on the top of the circumference and three produced equidistant radii on either side imposed on a larger circle, the whole in its turn being imposed on a quadrilateral. Thus:



But the figure refuses to remain purely linear. Colour invades it, and it is only by an effort of will that this invasion can be curbed as nearly as possible into chromatic neutrality. All too soon, however, dove-pink lights and Persian flames appear in the grey weave of the quadrilateral and the grey feline circles fade to beige; the muzzle, the ears, the paws, and the tip of the tail define themselves and begin to grow dark. The abstraction is on the point of degenerating and particularising itself into a Siamese cat on a Moslem prayer mat.

Let us return to the geometrical ideogram. Suppressed by the mental struggle to keep the colours at bay, Siamese characteristics find a new outlet: there are suddenly two interlacing sets of circles, a couple of cats instead of one, twins neatly conjoined. From this moment, control evaporates. The two cats become white and fluffy, their belled heads gazing from a ribboned basket. Soon they are three cats of mounting stature with eyes the size of saucers, millstones and round towers respectively. Then they multiply at great speed. Tabbies, tortoiseshells, marmalade cats, Manx cats, Angoras, and Persians proliferate in a disorderly and ever-growing clowder across acres of textile from Axminster, Kidderminster, Turkey, Bokhara and Bessarabia; spaces which change colour and shape with ease and speed and shrink and expand and revolve. Kilkenny cats, preparing to engage on brightly-coloured polygons, arch their backs and hiss. Some kittens have lost their mittens and there is a little pussy who will do no harm, but, here and there, a daunting supercat swaggers.

An obsolete cartoon-cat abruptly stops pacing a Vorticist mat of the 1920's as his glance shoots in a dotted line to a bottle of milk in an upper window. He scuttles nimbly up this airy hypoteneuse of dots; the window is ajar but the bottle is out of reach; above his head in a cloud appears a large question-mark; grasping this, he slips it through the crack into the neck of the bottle and, the question-mark being tubular, the level of the milk sinks rapidly. . . . A score of cats follow him in single file and the mats rise in inverted V's to form rooftops on which lithe silhouettes noisily mate. Witches' cats fly past on magic carpets and a whiff of brimstone betrays the presence of a hellcat in an embroidered circle of cabalistic signs. For a hallucinating split second a Maltese Cat, which is not a cat at all but a horse, materialises with a mat thrown across it like a blanket, and fades. . . . Now all of them are lengthening and streamlining into uniformity; the mat stiffens and turns gunmetal colour and tilts to the angle of a launching bay, until, with a sequence of swishes, spacecat after spacecat vanishes into the empyrean with the ear-drum-shattering double bang of a broken sound barrier. . . .

Language is a Pandora's box, and it is no good Professor Ayer dancing on the lid. It refuses to stay shut and only drives the inmates into a frenzy. There was a time, before the appearance of man, when shadowy *Ur*-cats—basic, loadless and unnamed, trotted without taint of legend or Pathetic Fallacy across some misty pleiocene. This time, now lost forever, would have been the golden age for Logical Positivism.

A last chance. The outlines are cautiously allowed to reassemble. The strain of re-focussing the mind's retina, of reducing the waiting chaos once more to the basic superimposition of two unequal circles on a parallelogram, is excruciating. Colour and a third dimension persistently intrude. With the final grinding effort to contract and sharpen the focus in order to abolish these interlopers, the outlines all but vanish and, in a dimly fluorescent interplay of right-angles and rings, an inner, a sub-basic cat appears as though under an X-ray. It is a vibrating and shuddering tangle of gut which burns, implicit with a million future discords, bright red in the gloom like the filament of an electric bulb. Confusion can go no further. It is time to send for Mr. Toynbee. He stoops and inserts both hands into this disordered nexus. Straightening again with splayed and extended fingertips, he removes Professor Ayer's cat from the mat and establishes it in the place where it belongs by right. I refer to the cradle.

The treacherous linguistic *Realpolitik*, the pandemonium of *Logpos*, are dispersed at once. Order and serenity are back on their thrones, and from the taut symmetry of those disentangling digits, purrs a message of hope:

"The cat,"

it says, in the words of Dame Edith Sitwell,

"is in his cradle,
"All's right with the world."

PATRICK LEIGH FERMOR

Hydra, Greece

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BOOKS

The Fires of Violence

"YOU'RE a smart man, and a man like you is bound to be getting into politics some of these days, and—well, this thing won't do you no harm." So does Mr. Christian, of Bardsville, Kentucky, a "character" and "grand old fighter," persuade Perce Munn, the central figure of *Night Rider*,* to support the ideals of the Association of Growers of Dark Fired Tobacco, "which ideal," as Mr. Christian later says, "is to make those son-of-a-bitching buyers pay me what my tobacco's worth." Mr. Munn, a young, up-and-coming small-town lawyer, at first refuses the invitation. " 'I'm not planning to go into politics,' he says, 'I've got enough to do already with my farm and my law practice.' But, as he spoke, he was almost aware of the discomfort of a lie, for what had, in the past, never seemed more than a daydream, a remote possibility out of many possibilities, now rose like a certainty before his mind, solid and beckoning." He is jockeyed into speaking from the Association's platform, proves to be a powerful and persuasive orator, and from that moment his fate is decided. The tobacco growers have social justice, courage, and fervour on their side; they also have treachery and a good deal of bigoted ignorance. The buyers have time and superior capital—time to wait for the Association's corruption and disintegration, money to buy traitors. The story is a familiar one. The Association drifts from persuasion to coercion, from coercion to violence. Meetings and speeches and voluntary membership change to secret oaths, night riding, crop burning, and, finally, murder. For a time the growers are able to avoid facing their defeat by blackmail, fear, and packed juries, but inevitably, in the end, reality bursts through from the world outside—a regiment arrives to maintain order. The Association falls to pieces, and its members—just, corrupt, selfish, and idealistic alike—have to come to terms with Power.

For most of the growers, the aim of their failed, petty revolt had been clear—the familiar mixture of ideal and material, justice against a powerful anonymous enemy, increased payment for their products. Perce Munn, however, is a different case, and it is this difference which particularly interests Mr. Penn Warren.

The scene of *Night Rider* is laid in Kentucky of 1904. The novel, however, was published in 1939, and its central problem belongs to our time. Perce Munn is essentially a contemporary horror—the little, empty, unfulfilled person who finds in the Party not so much an ideal, or a means to material ambition, but a realisation of himself in action and violence. In some respects, Mr. Penn Warren is at his best when he is describing group action, the activities of the Association itself, its corruption and collapse. Here the visual clarity of his language is at its height. Nevertheless the distortion of men's honest aims when they have passed through the twisting vice of secret oaths and outlaw comradeship is an old page of history. The conspiracies of Republican Rome or the Italian city states, the Chartist Movement or the Fenian Brotherhood would have served as well for a theme as the Association of Growers of Dark Fired Tobacco. Mr. Munn is different; his dead soul which he tries to reanimate by the warmth of the fires of violence is a product of

* *Night Rider*. By ROBERT PENN WARREN. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 13s. 6d.

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the 20th century's failures; he is the familiar hollow man.

In contrast to many of the other characters, whose background and past histories the author fills in so exactly, Munn's past history is shadowy. He left his small hometown to graduate in law in Philadelphia, but he returned to Bardsville to practice. For all the emptiness of his small-town life, he feared even more the loneliness of the big city. Despite his flickering ambitions, he preferred to be a trout among minnows. Of his parents, we know little except that his mother had been genteel. He only recalls one member of his family—at the time of his greatest loneliness, when the violence and secrecy into which "politics" lead him have cut him off from his wife, he recalls his mother's cousin Miss Sprag, an old, lonely, invalid, declassed woman whom he had known in Philadelphia. Family for him spells loneliness. Like the vast mass of those who are "good material" for political activity, Munn has to make sentiment do in place of spiritual feeling, good mixing mateyness in place of real communication, and smart-alec shrewdness in place of intelligent thought. When the book opens he feels himself a contented man with some sensible ambitions, and he resists at first the appeal to enter political life. But the conflict is no serious one. He is "happy" in his growing success as a local lawyer, he is "happily" married, he is "fond" of his shooting and fishing, he is "pleased" to be smarter than the rest of the guys, he "loves" his little farm, but his life is really a husk in which rattles the now dried up seed of something bigger, something he does not himself understand. Such a man, of course, is ripe for membership in the "Association," in the "Party," ripe for politics. What he finds there is nothing concrete but an emotional self-realisation; however, since there is no living self to realise, all that can emerge is a death wish: he ends a gunman with a price on his head.

Mr. Penn Warren's insight into Munn is extraordinary, a very real contribution to social psychology, though as I shall suggest later, his artistic exploitation of the subject is less satisfactory. He makes so many illuminating statements about the motivation of revolutionary political small fry that it is hard to choose which to dwell upon in the space of a review. Four aspects of Munn's career, however, seem to me of peculiar interest—the relation of his childhood games to his political activities, the curious force of mob oratory in an incoherent community, the political followers' need for a father figure, and the growing appetite for violence that feeds the spiritually dead.

It is a notable feature of the flat, materialistic man that the sentiments of his childhood, the emotions of his "gang" years, are often the only spiritual residue of his drained existence. For a fundamentally lonely man like Munn, whose empty adult years are only a continuation of a childhood of starved affection, the memories of the games he played as a boy, the comradeship of those years remain the one vital, happy memory. Munn, as I have said, recalls his parents seldom, but he does recall quite often the camping expeditions he had made as a child with his school friends. The violence into which politics lead him is a continuation of this happy fantasy of cowboys and Indians. Mr. Penn Warren describes this most beautifully in the last scene when the outlawed is tracked down and shot by the soldiers. "He tried to pull the trigger again, but could not. Lying there, while the solid ground lurched and heaved beneath him in a long swell, he drowsily heard the voices down the slope calling emptily, like the voices of boys at a game in the dark."

It is quite another aspect of modern man's failure that clinches Munn's entry into the political world in which he realises his death-wish. The organisers of the Association are anxious to ensure that the smart young lawyer shall be fully committed to the cause. To secure this aim, they manœuvre him into making an impromptu speech. Perhaps Mr. Penn Warren's irony in this scene is his highest achievement. Munn's life has no reality, he cannot truly communicate with himself or others. He has however the gift of the gab. His audience are small tobacco growers, semi-literate, incoherent, but their lives have a reality he has

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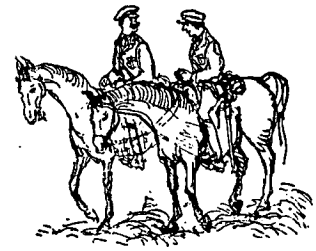
never known. He sways them to a man. His rhetoric is not an ordinary trick, because it comes from his own unconscious. "You came here through the dust and heat," he says to them, "because you thought you could get something here to help you. But there is nothing here to help you. You came here to find hope. . . . But there is no hope here for you. . . . There is nothing here except what you have brought with you from your homes, wherever they are. There is nothing here but an idea. And that idea is dead unless you have brought it life by your long trip here. It does not exist unless you give it life by your own hope and loyalty." It is a horrible irony, for Munn himself, of course, has nothing to offer but death.

For a time, however, Perce Munn does find a sense of hope and release from loneliness in the Association. This is more than anything due to the influence of an older man, Senator Tolliver. There are many older men in the movement and each has something of the father figure for which Munn, like so many revolutionary small fry, is seeking. Their portraits are Mr. Penn Warren's greatest achievement in *Night Rider*. The Senator, however, is the most important and deserves special mention. Born of an old Southern family ruined in the Civil War, Tolliver had known a degrading and love-starved childhood. He escaped from it to make good, marry a rich woman, build a gracious home, encourage his wife to an early death from drug-taking, and become a successful Senator. Like Munn, Senator Tolliver has the gift of words; like Munn, he is really a dead man. He is not however the little hollow man of our time, but a handsome, old 19th century Pecksniffian hypocrite, mouthing fine phrases and pinching young girls. He gives particular patronage to young Mr. Munn, invites him to a gracious, old-fashioned Christmas in his gracious home, flatters him, lays a paternal hand on his shoulders. In fact, however, the Senator is already an empty failure, on the point of bankruptcy, bought by the Tobacco Buyers. His treacherous defection from the Association leads it to its downward path of secrecy and violence. The betrayal by this father figure does more than anything to destroy Munn's character. In the end his last act of violent intent is to kill the old man, but he is unable to carry it out. It is a remarkable proof of Mr. Penn Warren's political acumen that he should have made this point in his first novel and in 1939.



'We never smoke during battle' he said angrily

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COLLINS

Munn's gradual obsession with violence cannot be analysed in the space of this review. It is surely—perhaps too surely—plotted in the course of the novel. Its motivation is clearly—perhaps too clearly—expressed by Lucille Christian, Munn's mistress. "Cold," she says, "I've always been cold. . . . That's why I did what I did, come to you. I was cold; I thought you would warm me. . . . I thought you must be warm, after that. . . . To do that you'd have to be warm, have to feel about something. To kill a man. . . . But you are cold, too. Whatever you did, you were cold. Like me, inside." Murder, in fact, is no more satisfactory for the defeated, the lonely, and the spiritually dead than benzedrine, it has no more lasting effect.

MR. PENN WARREN'S analysis, then, is acute, his psychology powerful. Why does the

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novel seem to me finally unsatisfactory? Part of the answer, I fear, lies in the date at which it was written. The subject, less brilliantly treated, has been given to us in many novels and films. Apart from this unsatisfactory modish criticism, however, I think there is a more fundamental fault. Mr. Munn is a case history, an important, contemporary history, but nevertheless a case history, and I suspect that the author has seen him so. Mr. Penn Warren has an easy flowing style, a very strong visual sense, and great control over action and narrative. It is with these formidable weapons that he has tried to excite the reader, to rush him along from incident to incident so that he does not notice how prepared, how exactly signposted, how ultimately touristic is the journey he is making. Each incident is so sharp before us, each scene so photographic that we are only half conscious that they are "made" sets, contrived dialogues, a bit "ham," a bit banal. Mr. Graham Greene has brought this sort of quick slick writing to perfection. What a wonderful film this would make, we think, but prose writing is not photography, the novel is not cinema. Ultimately, I believe, this slick, unreal quality of an otherwise brilliant book arises because Mr. Penn Warren is not truly engaged by his central figure. Perce Munn, the anonymous hollow man, might be tragic, heroic, or villainous, Mr. Penn Warren tries to remain at a distance and see him as the hollow man of our time. As a result he remains a brilliant but "made" character, the novel a powerful but contrived book, first-rate artifice, not quite art.

Angus Wilson

NO TIME FOR LAUGHTER

THE scarcity of good autobiographies remains a great and unexplained mystery. It is the only art in which everyone has some practice, since it is often difficult to write a private letter or even an official report without some use of it, and it is the only form of writing in which the material is ready to hand in abundance. Yet the "dear little deadly question of how to do it" is more formidable here than anywhere, if we may judge by the failures with which it is usually answered. In an illuminating essay Belloc once pointed out that autobiography was best achieved by people whose temperaments included a large measure of pomposity. Certainly it is necessary for the autobiographer to be possessed of a deep and serious interest in the subject of himself, but when he fulfils this condition it often means that he is a self-important bore. It should be added that the art of autobiography is extremely dangerous: writers who indulge in it can find that they have spent their capital.

How does all this apply to Mr. Arthur Koestler? Hardly at all, if at all. Most of the books written by this prolific writer come from an autobiographical impulse, and if this means that he takes a deep interest in himself and his adventures, he does so, not on account of pomposity, but because he recognises that the events he has lived through give him the right to speak for multitudes of men and women. In the three volumes of his self-portrait, of which *The Scum of the Earth*, the first to be written, is now reprinted,* a single subject holds the centre of the stage. It is the revival of persecution. His continual preoccupation is with the most frightful, the most unexpected, and probably the most important fact of the modern world, and one of which he has had a full experience. Less than thirty years ago it was a truism of informed and fashionable opinion that whatever might be said against the notion of the beneficence of progress,

**The Scum of the Earth.* By ARTHUR KOESTLER. Collins with Hamish Hamilton. 15s.

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religious persecution had undoubtedly come to an end. Such ideas are only acceptable in optimistic moments when we forget the known facts of human nature. The abolition of poverty is a great and noble aim which from time to time is thought to be nearly attained, but random enquiry usually proves immediately that the poor you have always with you. There is too much poverty in human nature for poverty to be eradicated, just as there is too much cruelty in the same place for persecution to vanish, until we are radically different.

IN THE summer of 1939, Mr. Koestler and an English girl were in the South of France. When the approaching outbreak of war became too obvious not to be seen, these two moved to Paris from where Mr. Koestler tried to go to England in order to join the British Army. He was unable to obtain the necessary permit from the British Embassy. He remained in Paris at the mercy of the French authorities who soon put him in prison for the same offence as had moved the British authorities to forbid him entry to this country: he belonged to "the scum of the earth," that is to say, he was a stateless person, just such an one as World War II was being waged to rescue. To a governmental mind such stateless persons are a permanent inconvenience, and the simplest solution is to treat them as criminals. The story is often very like *Candide*. Mr. Koestler was sent to a disgusting penal settlement in South East France, but in January 1940 he was let out. Not however to freedom, but to a queer sort of cat and mouse life that reflected the perplexed inefficiency of French administration; a life of alternating hope and despair, promise and renewed persecution, conducted in Ministries and police stations. At last Mr. Koestler swindled the French authorities out of his recapture by a ruse which is good to read about. Having become a doubtfully authentic member of the Foreign Legion he was involved in the mass migrations following the French defeat. He escaped with a party of British officers to England. On his arrival at our shores, the British authorities put him in prison for six weeks in solitary confinement. By this time

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there was the excuse for the jailers that immense German Fifth Columns had recently come to light in conquered Europe, and refugees needed to be examined carefully. But the fact that the jailers deprived these unconvicted prisoners of the right to smoke shows that the persecuting impulse, in a mild form, was nevertheless there. In *The Scum of the Earth*, Mr. Koestler shows little trace of indignation against this country, but a later book called *Thieves in the Night* repeats the worst and some of the absurdest allegations of our enemies against British policy and the British spirit. It is perhaps not extravagant to conclude that in his fictional account of Palestine under the Mandate Mr. Koestler gave rein to feelings whose origin lay in Pentonville. If this is so, only a prig could blame him.

The secondary theme (as it has now become) of *The Scum of the Earth* is the demoralisation of France in the first year of the war. Mr. Koestler could see this in its entirety and in its horrible union of mercilessness with lack of confidence. Convinced that she could not win against the Germans, France found herself in an anti-fascist war, and it is not a matter for surprise (no matter how much one's anger, regret, or disapproval) that Frenchmen in authority looked with irritation on the anti-fascist refugees who were, to a notable extent, an innocent cause of the war. In his introduction to this new edition of the book Mr. Koestler owns to having entertained many illusions of the Left at the time he wrote in 1941, and in the course of his then reflections he asserts that an inspiring French declaration of the anti-fascist purpose of the war, with a promise that victory would be combined with social reform, would have stirred the country to a true and unconquerable "*levée en masse*." Ardent Left leadership, in fact, could have saved France. The truth of those years was probably more sombre, and is perhaps better expressed in words spoken long before 1914: "*La France meurt; ne troublons pas son agonie.*" It was a mistake for France to have entered the war, and Frenchmen knew it. The further knowledge that there was no alternative to the mistake did not make French tempers any sweeter towards the wretches in their power.

THUS the secondary theme always leads back to the first, that world of chains and dungeons and mass enslavement to which modern progress has led the people of this age, to their great surprise. We know that Euclid's rectilinear geometry is obsolete for some purposes of scientific research, but we are not yet accustomed to the idea that it is equally invalid in our pictures of life and destiny. That we should inevitably find ourselves back at our starting-point after prodigies of progress is something that human imagination cannot yet grasp. Mr. Koestler's description of life in the prison camp of Vernet d'Ariège is incredible, and rings absolutely true. "In Liberal-Centigrade," he says in a terrible and witty passage, "Vernet was the zero point of infamy; measured in Dachau Fahrenheit it was still 32 degrees above zero. In Vernet beating-up was a daily occurrence; in Dachau it was prolonged until death ensued. In Vernet people were killed for lack of medical attention; in Dachau they were killed on purpose. In Vernet half the prisoners had to sleep without blankets in 20 degrees of frost; in Dachau they were put in irons and exposed to the frost." The most horrible of the French jailers was a homuncule called Lieutenant Cosne who, one may guess, was busy compensating a well-merited sense of inferiority by the use of his whip on his charges. One hopes that Mr. Koestler has given the real name and that Cosne has read the book. The last picture we are given of him is one of Mr. Koestler's best touches. When the order for release came through, the news was communicated to Mr. Koestler by this loathsome little officer. "He pressed his left hand against his corset and stretched out the right, after having placed the leather crop on the table. I was so completely taken aback that I actually shook hands. I regret it to this day."

That passage is not a typical one, for the great virtue of Mr. Koestler's writing is magnanimity; indeed, the reader is likely to feel more exasperated than the author at the tale of injustice he has to tell. Mr. Koestler is without bitterness, and suffering has not narrowed his vision. For that reason, although he is not a subscriber to any religious faith, he can give an

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account of a Catholic priest and of how he expresses his belief that is almost worthy of Bernanos, and there are few more moving sketches in modern reporting than the one here of Père Pieprot blessing this unbeliever when the two parted during the migrations of June 1940, the unbeliever feeling constrained to kneel in the road. The last words of the book have become well known, but they can stand re-quotation here for they sum up all that is best in this admirable author.

"At the moment we are still howling like dogs in the dark. I wish the time of laughter had come."

Christopher Sykes

THE DECADENCE OF DETECTION

THE general conclusion at which the detective fiction issue of *The Times Literary Supplement* (February 25th, 1955) seems to arrive is that the day of the classical detective story is done. The exhausted genre will, no doubt, like golf and crossword puzzles, retain a narrowing, if sizeable circle of addicts, but it will no longer be—indeed pretty clearly no longer is—something to which the literate universally have recourse from time to time. Explanation of this in terms of the impending destruction of civilisation is hardly convincing. For most people in this country life is still as dull, tame, and orderly as it was thirty years ago at the height of the classic period and there is no lack of enthusiasm for cognate types of fiction—the Buchan–Greene pursuit novel, the American novel of violence (Faulkner, Penn Warren, Chandler) and, more remotely, science-fiction and certain kinds of historical novel. The common factor of these varied kinds of book is quite simply extraordinariness, in its literal sense. They help us to read them by actually seizing our attention instead of mutely requiring us to make the often stern effort of giving it. There is more and fuller satisfaction to be got from *Du Côté de chez Swann* than from *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, but so is there from actually climbing a mountain than from ascending it by funicular. And in literature as in mountaineering the highest peaks can only be ascended on foot. But as long as it is possible to read at all there will be demand for a literature of surface attraction, requiring a negligible effort of response from the reader and we can presume that the novel of the extraordinary will continue to fill this bill. Only a man on the run in Eastern Europe could fail to enjoy the novels of Eric Ambler. The war, after all, influenced the magnitude rather than the direction of people's reading, but then for most people the war was as dull as, or duller than, ordinary times.

A more plausible line of explanation for the decadence of the classic detective story is that the form has been strangled by its practitioners' self-imposed limitations. Within the strict Agatha Christie convention ingenuity can go no further without degenerating into the hollow formalism of the more involved kind of locked-room mystery or into what *The Times Literary Supplement* referred to as the "lunatic pastiches" of Nancy Spain. The principal suffocating constriction is what may be called the Postulate of Deducibility. This demands, not merely that the actual solution shall be seen, in retrospect, to be psychologically and otherwise plausible, but that the evidence stated shall be sufficient conclusively to support the correct hypothesis and conclusively to knock out all alternatives to it in terms of a standard of relevance of the kind employed in a court of law. It is by reference to this postulate that the skilled regular reviewers of detective fiction assess the "fairness" of the books with which they deal and employ the rest of their unique critical vocabulary.

The dire sterilising effects of this postulate have come about in a cumulative, self-fostering manner. The sheer bulk in which detective fiction is produced has led to increasingly wild and far-fetched novelty of plot. Addicts need ever stronger doses. But as the problems get harder, more and more of the material content

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of the novel is tyrannically annexed; character and scene withdraw to make room for the adequate logical development of false trails and, as far as character and scene survive at all, they have to conform to the structure of the problem. The puzzle and its deducible solution, originally no more than a characteristic feature of this kind of book, have become the whole essence of the matter. Instead of being novels cast in the form of puzzles, they become puzzles presented in a superficially fictional way. A complete reversal of values takes place: what was an added enticement in the novel of surface attraction comes to be the whole point. One form this takes is the paralysing convention of finitude: remote country-houses, cut-off islands, yachts, trains, and so forth, ensure the definite causal isolation of the puzzle's elements. Again, character cannot be developed through the description of conduct, for this becomes "unfairly" misleading, the wrong sort of red-herring altogether, so that characters are reduced to stock types fitted out with an independent apparatus of relevant motives. In the end, any sort of credibility or faithfulness to life is jettisoned, as in such books as Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Niggers* or *Murder in the Blue Train*. In these circumstances the detective writer has a choice between two alternatives: either he can embrace the full consequences of this line of development and frankly admit that the puzzles he constructs bear about the same relation to novels as do algebraic puzzles of the Jim-is-two-years-older-than-his-father-was-when-Jim's-grandfather type do to short stories, or he can strive, with little hope of success, against the imperious requirements of his form's tradition, to make a novel out of his puzzle.

Two recent novels more or less illustrate these alternative approaches. Marion Mainwaring's *Murder in Pastiche** puts nine well-known fictional detectives on a liner and shows them applying their several techniques to a murder on board. The puzzle is not a very exciting one but the conventional demands of the form are truly met and the parody is thrown in to add a little savour. But even this minor literary intention is rather inadequately carried out. For the supposed parodies are barely parodies at all except in the case of the ludicrous Mickey Spillane detective. The book might easily be a cooperative product of the authors parodied, for there is hardly any element of critical distortion. Poirot, Miss Silver, and the rest behave and talk exactly as they do in their usual surroundings and the result is studio photography rather than caricature. It might even be argued that some of them are impossible to parody since they are intentionally facetious inventions in the first place. I cannot see that any kind of reader will be very satisfied with this book, for all its skill and ingenuity. It falls between too many stools. But in its very dullness it is a fair representative of the pure or algebraic detective story.

The practicable alternative to algebra seems to be fantasy. Margery Allingham's nineteenth detective novel, *The Beckoning Lady** falls into this class, or I should say the first half of it does since, on reaching that point, I was absolutely unable, despite repeated efforts, to read any further. Miss Allingham has a considerable reputation and I am sure that most of her books are a great deal better than this one. After 117 pages, extremely little that could form part of a puzzle had come into view but a large number of absurdly grotesque characters had appeared and spoken in an arch or ludicrously accented or otherwise exaggeratedly characteristic fashion. This lush, dank fantasy with its hideously swollen projections of stereotypical artists, cockneys, policemen, lovely women, precocious children, spivs, millionaires, and so forth strikes me as the product of extreme exasperation. Grimly determined to make something lively and original, illuminated by sardonic references to the contemporary world and scintillating humour, Miss Allingham has succeeded in sweating out a chaotic pantomime. It is more like the works of Enid Blyton, in which human attributes are ascribed in an indiscriminate manner to toadstools, pixies, and cigarette ends than anything else. The moral is that violent measures—the monstrous inflation of stock characters—are not enough to transform a puzzle into a novel.

Assuming that the classic puzzle has reached an impasse, that given the Postulate of Deducibility there can be only detective problems not detective novels, it may well be asked why the postulate should be retained;

**Murder in Pastiche*. By Marion Mainwaring. Gollancz. 10s. 6d.

**The Beckoning Lady*. By Margery Allingham. Chatto and Windus. 11s. 6d.

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for surely it is not essential to what is of value in the novel of surface attraction, the "entertainment." I have defined these as books which it requires no effort to read, whose attractions are immediate, and certainly violent or unlawful acts whose perpetrators are unknown form a variety of subject-matter which fits the definition. But, in the first place, the really important feature is the literal extraordinariness, the violence or illegality of the crucial act, which supplies the crime story with its surface attraction. That its perpetrator is unknown is an additional, secondary, turn of the screw. Certainly our excitement depends on curiosity, but this need not necessarily relate to the problem of who did the act but may just as well concern the act's consequences. Secondly, even if it is held that a true crime novel should propound a problem and its solution, this need not be a problem which the reader is fully equipped to solve. It is enough that when the solution is given he can see that it is a reasonable one. And surely this is the position in which most readers of classic detective stories find themselves. I find it hard to believe the claims of all those discriminating readers who excuse their addiction to detective stories on the ground that reading them is a strictly intellectual, ratiocinative, pastime.

Ira Levin's *A Kiss Before Dying** is a case in point. This original and exciting book only presents the reader with a puzzle for a short stretch of its course—the first third is written from the murderer's point of view, the final third after he has been fully identified. Yet its special virtues are peculiarly those of classic detective fiction—it is clearly and effectively written but with no notable distinction of style, it is penetrating (and remarkably grown-up considering the extreme youth of the author) but not especially illuminating about its characters and their situation. These are solid virtues, but what really distinguishes the book is its pure, Hitchcockian excitement, the passionate concern it evokes with what is going to happen next. It has all the elements of surface attraction without any of the formal constriction of the classic puzzle.

But stories of crime, and the wider class of thrillers generally, can aspire to more than this. Simenon's latest Maigret stories to be translated—*Maigret Right and Wrong*—as well as being exciting are of real literary value.* His gloomy, accurate, yet ultimately charitable interpretation of human nature, his astonishing power of telling us just what we want to know about the people and situations he describes, the extraordinary range over which his literary vision extends are as prominently in evidence as ever. In the second story—"Maigret's Mistake"—there is a remarkable portrait of a genuinely amoral man, but the same clarity and depth of understanding is applied to the young saxophone player, the shoplifting charwoman, and the spinster librarian as to the sex-ridden old brain-surgeon. In these stories there is a problem and a detective at work but no puzzle of the classic kind (though Maigret is less taciturn than usual). Simenon is wise to stick to his characteristic length. His half-novels provide just enough space to develop in depth, but with perfect economy, a handful of characters linked by a crime. In his *Violent Ends*† are two stories set in the United States, the first of an

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introverted school master suspected of, and finally goaded by suspicion into, sexual crime, the second of a comfortably situated member of a gambling racket who is made to "finger" his brother who has come up against the organisation (complete with a brief and convincing explanation of how large-scale criminal syndicates go about the colonisation of unorganised regions). Though not as good as the Maigret stories, these show Simenon's ability to grasp a new environment with all its familiar force.

When novels about murder have any literary value it is in spite of, rather than because of, their character as deductive puzzles. The special literary utility of the act of murder is that it presents the familiar in a new and exciting light, discloses unusual and revealing possibilities in the most ordinary kinds of person and situation; it is a crude but effective device for bringing into the open what is concealed behind the socially observable aspects of personality. It is to these exciting disclosures of possibility and not to their character as acrostics that must be attributed the power of crime novels to seize our attention. The decrepitude of the strictly algebraic detective story is no sign of the general exhaustion and bankruptcy of the novel of crime.

Anthony Quinton

WITHOUT COMMON DENOMINATOR

WHEN reviewing several books together it is customary, I believe, to discover at once some quality, however far-fetched, shared by them all. In these five works I can find no common denominator whatever save that their authors write in English. Which does not mean that they *are* all English, for Miss Helen Eustis is an American writing of America. Nor can it be said that the five books are concerned with our present century, for Miss Compton-Burnett writes about (need one say?) her own impossible private world of some sixty years ago, and the action of *The Fool Killer** takes place shortly after the American Civil War. Only the three male authors write of "our time": Mr. Newby crazily and not convincingly of the Egypt of King Farouk, Mr. John Wiles racily and bawdily of a third-rate theatrical company in the English provinces in the 1950's, and Mr. Maurice Rowdon grimly, gorily of Austria and Italy during and after the last war.

What can there be to say of Miss Compton-Burnett that has not been said before? Even her publishers would appear to be flummoxed, for they do not even remind us that this unique, prolific writer has been publishing novels for no fewer than four-and-forty years. From my own observation these books are either pounced upon the moment they appear, or as promptly dismissed. You are either a "fan," which means that you will willingly stop and "talk" Compton-Burnett in the midst of a howling gale or you will, if you are wise, hold your tongue whenever a fan is present. At the risk of my skin then, I maintain that Miss Compton-Burnett's books are not novels at all: they are plays, without props or stage directions, all very much alike and all emitting the theatrical aura of Congreve and of Wilde. It is doubtful, however, whether any stage was peopled by such characters as those who epigrammatically and so devastatingly lash out at one another for 250-odd pages in *Mother and Son*.* Rather than human beings of flesh and blood, this book's men, women, and chorus of so-called children are abnormally articulate monsters, all equipped to answer Yes to this question put to a prospective companion of a female tyrant by the latter's adolescent (and illegitimate) nephew: "Are you proof against insult, Miss Wolsey? Because, if not, this is no place for you." A

**The Fool Killer*. By HELEN EUSTIS. Secker and Warburg. 10s. 6d.

**Mother and Son*. By I. COMPTON-BURNETT. Victor Gollancz. 12s. 6d.

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warning as appropriate to prospective readers of Miss Compton-Burnett as it was to the unfortunate Miss Wolsey.

Like plays, this writer's inimitable books are all brief, yet they take longer to read and digest than most novels three times their size. Every page, moreover, demands to be read aloud—slowly, and to adults only. After finishing this latest work, one thinks of all its characters (and not least of their creator) as formidable—yes, and *formidable*.

The Fool Killer, I understand, won wide acclaim last year in the United States, where one critic declared it to be "the only American novel concerned with the physical and emotional life of a boy . . . that can be compared with J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*." Between these two novels there is surely more resemblance in style than in content. George Mellish was an orphan of 12, and this is how he begins to tell the romantic story of what happened to him after he escaped from his sadistic foster-mother: "When I come home I knowed the Old Crab was waiting for me, and I would catch it. . . . She was by the stove, stirring something; I tried to sneak past, but she reached out and catched me by the ear." There is, perhaps, a suggestion of the Salinger novel here, and it is greatly to Miss Eustis's credit not only that she manages to sustain the archaic language so long but that she almost never allows herself, as the writer, to see, say, or do anything of which one feels a lonely boy, in his aimless wanderings on foot in unfamiliar country, would be incapable. While reading *The Fool Killer*, however, not once was I reminded of any living writer; rather, from its beginning to its end, of Mark Twain. The adventures of George Mellish—his days and nights with the hermit, Dirty Jim Jelliman, who warns him that women are "worse" than the Devil (or the Fool Killer); his friendship with Milo Bogardus, who makes George feel what it must be like to have "folks"; and above all the moving and horrifying (if somewhat sentimental) account of what happens to the orphan-child in the house of the childless Galts—these adventures should prove as timeless, as fascinating to boys anywhere as those of Tom Sawyer.

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EYRE & SPOTTISWOODE

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An Egyptian police officer in *The Picnic at Sakkara** suspects for a moment that a young English lecturer at Cairo University might possibly be, of all things, sane. But he quickly changes his mind. "It is too much to believe," he says. "Sir, we are all mad here." And whether or not Mr. Newby means them to be, pretty well everyone in his *Picnic* is. Even Edgar Perry, the suspect young intellectual, described by his boss as "an inoffensive creature in steel-rimmed glasses," seems naïve to the point of lunacy. Some of the crazy things this stock comic does, such as tearing up under the very nose of the Princess Toureiya herself a report he has made on the living conditions of students, astonishes even the young man himself. As for His Excellency the Pasha, he considers Perry not so much a loony as a fanatic—"the sort of man who prepares a report and then thinks it ought to be carried out." Perry's students, on the other hand, because he allows himself to be arrested for trying to better their conditions, hail him as a saint. And as "a mark of respect" they invite him to a picnic. They also invite Perry's bore of a wife, Mary—who accepts with alacrity because it would open up "a prospect of heroic sacrifice in the service of the unfortunate students." What happened at Sakkara and after will not be recounted here, nor will I reveal the particular form Mary's madness takes—a piece of preposterous deception which lands her up for lunch in the Anglo-Egyptian Union to produce what for me is this novel's one really comic scene.

I have the highest regard for Mr. Newby's talent but when his publishers assert that "this delicious comedy" is "wholly credible," I say shucks.

I found *The Try-Out*† far funnier and perfectly credible; chiefly, I think, because its narrator, a young stage-manager, is on the tough-sentimental side, and unselfconscious. Mr. John Wiles is a writer one would like to know more about (and no doubt soon will). It is difficult to imagine two worlds further apart than those portrayed in his two published novels. His first, *The Moon to Play With*, was a moving, beautifully-written story of a Negro boy caught in the gangster world of Johannesburg; a tale told with such authenticity that I for one suspected the writer himself of being "coloured" or at least a South African. Now Mr. Wiles comes up with a roaring, bawdy, highly sophisticated tragi-comedy about life behind the footlights in grim, provincial England. *The Try-Out* is as English as Marie Lloyd, as up-to-date as last night's "Light Programme," and as redolent of greasepaint and backstage chaos as the cry of *Dah-ling*! from the tongue of Tallulah. As for the plot—which revolves round a bad play by a schoolteacher who suffers from the integrity of total innocence—it moves as fast and frantically as Paulina, the novel's most memorable character, who "looked wonderful until you saw her close to"—when "you realised how little she was wearing and how much she ought to have worn."

My one fear is that if, with *The Try-Out*, Mr. Wiles hopes to increase the ardour of aspiring young Thespians to continue their careers, he may be disappointed. The theatre, as he takes pains to point out, entails more than just hard work. What this book does increase is one's curiosity about its author and the kind of world he is going to tackle next.

Of Sins and Winter* is not fiction: it is an autobiographical confession by a man who appears to have been unable to exorcise the guilt he feels for having taken part in "mass murder" during the last war. Mr. Rowdon describes his book as "a voyage into the provinces of murder"—or rather "abstract murder." Oddly enough, Mr. Rowdon was not an airman dropping bombs on an invisible enemy, but a gunner officer with experience of fighting in which he seems to have come almost as close to the Germans as to be able to see "the whites of their eyes." These scenes on the Italian front—particularly one in which the author, utterly exhausted from battle, manages in a moment to inject courage into a houseful of soldiers

**The Picnic at Sakkara.* By P. H. Newby. Jonathan Cape. 12s. 6d.

†*The Try-Out.* By John Wiles. Chatto and Windus. 12s. 6d.

**Of Sins and Winter.* By Maurice Rowdon. Chatto and Windus. 11s. 6d.

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petrified with fear—are among the most vivid and terrifying I have ever read.

As an indictment of modern warfare (although, alas, not so modern any more), *Of Sins and Winter* is extremely powerful. "Abstract compassion," writes Mr. Rowdon, "goes hand in hand with abstract murder, and is its other self. If I pity a *class* of man, a *country* of men, then in my pity must be murder. That is why we are crucified into abstraction. We put out our hand to help and we find the sufferer dead, by that same hand. If you ask for mass benefits, then you must expect mass graves." Here, it seems to me, is described the dilemma not only of war and peace, but that of this century.

Well-written, profoundly serious, *Of Sins and Winter* is nevertheless an obsessive, morbid book; some fundamental human quality (other than humour) is lacking. It was only after I had laid down the book and returned to it that I realised that the author is really the only character in it; and even he has no name, comes from some anonymous place he calls "the prison of streets" where "nothing was warm . . . nothing grew." From this grim background, War—he maintains—rescued him and made him strong. "I think it is not accidental," he adds, "that we should have found our health in murder." At the end of his journey, however, in a chapter I wish I could find more convincing, he at last discovers happiness in the realisation that the shame is not on him alone, but "on every one of us."

James Stern

THE TRUTH OUTSIDE THE RULES

IN THESE days of collected editions of the most famous English and American poets, one feels a sense of culmination and finality. One feels that the 20th century is already over; the runaway horse of History is galloping somewhere in the 21st century. As each poet displays his book we are reminded of the incredible riches and the incredible wreckage of our age. Modern literature is a kind of Last Judgement in which our acts are sorted out and pondered. The prescience of ruin, the crackpot theories, the prayers, the records of our personal grief—these have been the subjects of our poems.

Our age has favoured mythopœism rather than poetry, theory instead of practice. Literature that feathers its nest is always theoretical; actual life cannot touch it. The great mythic poems of our time still loom larger than life (as they are supposed to) and still give us a fictitious sense of the age. Of the poems of Pound and Eliot and Stevens and Cummings and Yeats, as well, we might say: this is the symptomatic literature of the age. Where is the literature itself?

"Poetry is a game played with the reader according to rules, but it is also a truth game in which the truth is outside the rules." Spender says this in his introduction, referring to the revision of some of his poems. But the statement has a greater application. In the pretentious mythic poetry of our time the truth is *inside* the rules; the truth and the rules are one. The message of such poetry is: Read and be saved. With the other, more "human" poetry, the message frequently is: We transcend our errors. The major poet is not allowed mistakes. He is above the human situation and must observe the world according to the twist of his field-glasses. The human poet, on the other hand, records the grief and the joy of man now. History betrays him again and again, yet he survives.

Spender, MacNeice, Day Lewis, and Dylan Thomas—who belongs with this group—represent the best of what we have of the human poetry of our century. They belong to the vital tradition rather than to some world of absolute commitment. Their poetry is intimate in a sense which endears them to the age, and which is forbidden by the immobile myth-makers. A healthy literature must, of course, work from both sides. Here we are considering the real birds on the unreal singing-trees.

IT IS not quite accurate to speak of Spender, Day Lewis, and MacNeice as a group (with Auden as absentee choir-master). Their

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likenesses have been pointed out before; their dissimilarities are more to the point.

MacNeice has been admired quietly throughout the English-speaking world for many years, but his significance has never been properly estimated. He is the natural poet of the age, possibly the only living poet who knows how to speak in poetry. Perhaps it is because of his ease of manner that he is taken for granted—especially in a time when the difficult is what fascinates. Yet one cannot overestimate his gift for character, for aside, for subtlety of tone, and for a masterly control of the tatterdemalion idiom of the 20th century.

The present volume* is a continuation of the *Autumn Journal* of 1938. In that excellent chapter of our lives the climax was the outbreak of war. In *Autumn Sequel* the climax is the death of Dylan Thomas. Of all the elegiac poetry written to Thomas, MacNeice's cantos 18 and 20 in this work are the most moving and the least mawkish. His may be the best portrait we shall ever have of Thomas. And his accounts of jobs and journeys are endlessly entertaining. There is a running colloquy between the daily news and himself. There are numerous greetings and goodbyes, evaluations and appreciations. What distinguishes MacNeice from almost every other modern writer of great gifts is his good humour. If the humour is groundless it is none the less effective. It is the saving grace of modern poetry.

The Day Lewis collection† is marred by the long sequences of early poems, loud and prophetic and too often empty. The poet admits the fault but thinks it wise to preserve the record. A better reason to retain the poems is the presence of certain of the lyrics upon which Day Lewis's reputation already rests securely. He reminds one of Tennyson; Tennyson needed imaginary backdrops before which to perform. Some of the long sequential poems recall *Maud*, if Maud were a Communist, her brother a Fascist, and Day Lewis the lover who is finally deprived of everything but a commission in the Army. And it is necessary to point out that some of the lyrics such as "Oh hush thee, my baby,/Thy cradle's in pawn:" are examples of propaganda at its worst, and an example of the truth that can spoil poetry.

Day Lewis's recovery from this kind of confusion has been slow but sure. In *Overtures to Death* one begins to see the change; in *Word over All* he comes into his own. The later poems on the failure of love have some of the strength of Yeats; and the work picks up admirably in the group called "Poems 1943–47," which contains much of his best poetry. The same might be said of the picture-gallery poems in the more recent *An Italian Visit*. The fault of this collection is the lack of blue pencilling. On the other hand, he explains his inability to improve his early poetry and his want of inclination to turn his back on it. We know that this is not the definitive collection.

Reading through Spender's book* one is struck by the number of love poems, many of them, in the opinion of this reviewer, among the most moving in modern poetry. They dominate the work as a whole. It is somewhat startling to think of Spender as a love poet—it is an expression we have not used for a long time—but that is what he is. The war poems, the political poems, also are poems of love for mankind, and poems of the pathos and tragedy of those crushed by the hideous impersonality of modern life. Spender is sometimes humourless and heavy with ennui, but the very awkwardness of his style somehow makes these criticisms pointless. On the other hand, he does not make a cult of his honesty.

Spender has the saving "metaphysical" technique without which a poem like the "Elegy for Margaret" or the beautiful love poem "Daybreak" would be almost unbearably intimate to read. In this connection we should also mention "Explorations," the series of spiritual exercises which approach in intensity the holy poetry of mystics. And finally, Spender's editing of his own much more voluminous work is on the whole, excellent. There are a few poems one misses, and there are changes one regrets and, now and then, resents. And there is one bowdlerisation (in "Polar Exploration"). But the collection as a whole is a solid achievement, a living book and not a hieratic text.

Karl Shapiro

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* *Autumn Sequel*. By LOUIS MACNEICE. Faber. 12s. 6d.

† *Collected Poems 1954*. By C. DAY LEWIS. Jonathan Cape and The Hogarth Press. 21s.

* *Collected Poems 1928–1953*. By STEPHEN SPENDER. Faber. 15s.

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